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Volume 59

Two Early Lives of Severos, Patriarch of Antioch

Translated with an introduction and notes by
SEBASTIAN BROCK and BRIAN FITZGERALD

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CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Abbreviations	ix
Maps	x

Introduction

1. Severos: outline of his life	1
2. The main theological issues	9
3. The biographical materials for the life of Severos	11
A. 'Lives'	11
B. Other materials	14
4. Zacharias	15
5. Anonymous Life (attributed to John of Beth Aphthonia)	24
6. The Present Translations	29

Translations

1. Zacharias, 'Life' of Severos	33
2. Anonymous Life of Severos, attributed to John of Beth Aphthonia	101
Glossary	140
Appendix: Bishops of the Five Main Sees, c. mid-fifth to mid-sixth centuries	145
Bibliography	148
Index of names	160
Select index of Greek words	169
Index of biblical references	173

PREFACE

Severos, patriarch of Antioch, was one of the most important theological figures of the sixth century; he is also someone about whom a great deal of documentation survives; besides his own voluminous writings (most of which are only preserved in Syriac translation), he was also the subject of two early biographical works, the first written during his lifetime, the second only shortly after his death in 538. The first of these works, by Zacharias, his fellow student in Alexandria and Beirut, was written in response to a pamphlet alleging that Severos had partaken in pagan sacrifices while a student, and is primarily concerned with his student days, covering his life only up to 512, when he became patriarch of Antioch. Zacharias' work is of particular interest for the information it provides about student life at the Law School in Beirut, and has been much cited in that connection.

The anonymous *Life*, attributed to John of Beth Aphthonia, which clearly knows Zacharias' work, continues the life of Severos up to his death. It is almost certainly the work of a monk of the famous Miaphysite monastery of Qenneshre, on the Euphrates, which had been founded by John bar Aphthonia, who died in 537; if, as seems likely, this John is the same person as John of Beth Aphthonia, the attribution cannot be correct, given that the *Life* knows of Severos' death in 538. In view of the author's probable location, it is perhaps not surprising that there is hardly any information about Severos' last twenty years in Egypt, whither he had fled at the accession of Justin I in 518; it is in fact only Severos' visit to Constantinople in 535–36 that receives coverage.

SPB is responsible for sections 1–4 and 6 of the Introduction and the translation and notes to Zacharias' *Life*, and BJB for section 5 of the Introduction and the translation and notes to the anonymous *Life* attributed to John of Beth Aphthonia. In the choice between Greek and Latin forms of names we have opted for Greek forms (since these are closer to the Syriac transcriptions of them), with two exceptions: for the most familiar individuals we have retained the Latin form (e.g. Nestorius), and for names where the Syriac form is different from the Greek, we have provided the standard English form (e.g. John, rather than Ioannes or Iohannan).

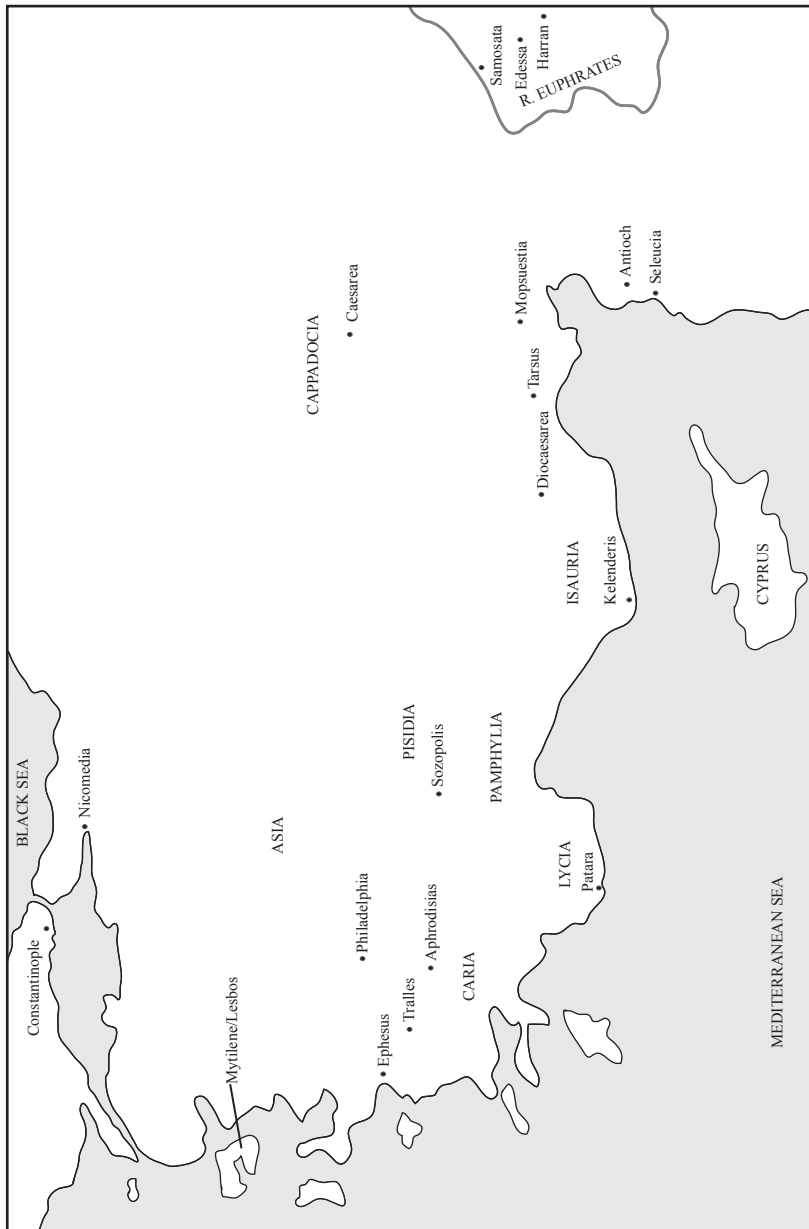
We are greatly indebted to Mary Whitby for her many valuable suggestions, together with her editorial and stylistic advice, and to the staff of Liverpool University Press for their careful work.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ACO</i>	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i> , ed. E. Schwartz (Berlin, 1914–)
Anon., <i>VSev.</i>	M.A. Kugener, <i>Vie de Sévère par Jean, Supérieur du Monastère de Beith Aphthonia</i> (Patrologia Orientalis 2.3, 1904), cited by section number
BHG	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca (3rd edition, Brussels, 1957)
BHO	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis (Brussels, 1910)
<i>CCT</i>	A. Grillmeier and Th. Hainthaler, <i>Christ in Christian Tradition</i> I, II.1–4 (London, 1965–96)
CIG	A. Boeckh and others (eds), <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> (1825–77)
<i>CPG</i>	M. Geerard, <i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> , I–III, and <i>Supplementum</i> (Turnhout, 1974–98)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Louvain, 1903–)
<i>DPhA</i>	R. Goulet (ed.), <i>Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques</i> , I– (Paris, 1989–)
<i>GEDSH</i>	S.P. Brock, A. Butts, G.A. Kiraz, and L. van Rompay (eds), <i>The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage</i> (Piscataway, NJ, 2011)
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
Lampe	G.W.H. Lampe, <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> (Oxford, 1961)
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
<i>PLRE</i>	J.R. Martindale (ed.), <i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> II (Cambridge, 1980).
PO	Patrologia Orientalis (Paris/Turnhout, 1903–).
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta (Rome)
SC	Sources chrétiennes (Paris)
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool)
Zach., <i>VSev.</i>	M.A. Kugener, <i>Vie de Sévère par Zacharie</i> (PO 2.1; 1904), cited by section number



Map 1 Palestine and Syria



INTRODUCTION

1. SEVEROS: OUTLINE OF HIS LIFE

Since good recent outlines of Severos' life can readily be found, especially in Allen¹ and in Alpi,² the account below largely focuses on three key points in his career: his family origins and his conversion to Christianity while a law student in Berytos (Beirut); his dramatic escape from Antioch in September 518, at the inception of the reign of Justin; and the fateful turn of events in Constantinople in 536.

Origins: pagan or Christian?

Severos was from Pisidia where he must have been born around 465. His parents were from an upper-class pagan family, though in the Syriac biographical tradition his pagan ancestry has been entirely blotted out of the narrative, and it is only thanks to the Coptic translation of an autobiographical passage in a homily that Severos preached at the shrine of St Leontios in Daphne on 18 June 513 that we have Severos' own account, which makes his pagan background absolutely certain. The Greek original of his Homily 27 is lost, and the same applies to the sixth-century Syriac translation; what survives is Jacob of Edessa's revision of the earlier Syriac translation (Jacob undertook this in the late seventh century) and a Coptic (Sa'idic) translation.³ Comparison of the two translations shows that the Syriac has modified the first passage, and entirely omitted the second. In the first, the effect of St Leontios' miracles on Severos caused him to adopt the monastic life, while in the Coptic, his conversion was from 'the fables of the Hellenes' (i.e. pagan beliefs) to 'a life full of wisdom' (that is, the Christian life). In the passage omitted in the Syriac translation Severos specifically states that at the time 'I was still a Hellene'.

1 Allen and Hayward 2004, 3–30.

2 Alpi 2009, I, 39–56.

3 The Syriac text was published by Brière and Graffin in PO 36.4 (1974): 560; the Coptic by Garitte 1966, 357–58 (Latin tr. 338–39).

Syriac II

I know of many of those young men who were reading Roman law in laughter-loving Berytos, who went to (St Leontios) for prayer, and all of a sudden they cast off from their minds the blinkers of worldly ideas and concepts; then, as it were renouncing (them) they purified their (minds) of such things and underwent an excellent transformation, turning round and submitting themselves to a philosophical mode of conduct and the monastic life: I personally am one of these who became transformed by the miracles of the martyr, having been captivated by them.

Coptic

IV.1 I know of many of the young men who were studying Roman law in the rowdy city, that is, Berytos; they went to his place for prayer and soon abandoned their hollow education along with the affairs of life; purifying their minds from the fables of the Hellenes, they made an excellent transformation and turned from them to a life full of wisdom, accompanied by converse with blessed monks. And I myself was one of those.

The Coptic translation then continues with a passage that is entirely absent from the Syriac, apart from the mention of Leontios' miracles and the call to the monastic life, which the Syriac adaptor has incorporated into the previous section:

IV.2 While I was still in that town [Berytos] I heard of the miracles and many healings which the blessed martyr [Leontios] brought about. My heart was stirred within me – or rather, the God who loves mankind stirred my thought so that I should hasten to the martyr shrine of the holy martyr Leontios and pray. 3. So I set off from the town of Berytos, along with a friend of mine, a *scholastikos*,⁴ and we came to his holy place and prayed. 4. I, however, (went off and) prayed alone, by myself, since I was still a Hellene. This is what I said: 'Holy Leontios, holy martyr, petition your God on my behalf, so that he may save me from the religious cult of the Hellenes and from the customs (*sunētheia*) of my ancestors.' 5. On that night a great mystery was revealed to me of which I am not worthy and of which I do not dare to speak. 6. And thus it was that the God of the universe, Christ Jesus, converted me from the error of the Hellenes through the prayers of the holy martyr St Leontios, and called me to the chaste life (*bios semnos*) of monasticism.

4 This will certainly have been Zacharias.

The obfuscation of Severos' pagan background was already at work in Zacharias' 'Life', where Zacharias (who certainly knew the truth) disingenuously states that 'some say' that Severos' grandfather was a bishop. It so happens that there had indeed been a bishop of Sozopolis named Severos who had been present at the Council of Ephesus, and it was no doubt this conveniently shared name that greatly assisted the process of christianizing Severos' ancestry. It is unfortunate that the sixth-century translation of Severos' Homily 27 does not survive, since it would be of considerable interest to know at what stage in the homily's transmission the passage about his paganism was edited out.

The chronology of Severos' life c.485–518

The date of Severos' birth is not known, but it is usually estimated as being c.465; this would make him 20 years old when he arrived in Alexandria to complete his studies there before going on to Berytos. He probably spent two years in Alexandria (485–86), and it was during his time there that he met Zacharias. Severos then moved on to Berytos to study law (487), followed by Zacharias a year later. Severos' legal studies probably lasted till 491, and at some point during this time his conversion and baptism took place. After completing his studies he spent some time travelling with Zacharias, still fully intending to proceed to a legal career. His abandonment of these plans and his adoption of the monastic life took place at some time after the death (on 1 December 491) of the famous ascetic, Peter the Iberian, the figurehead of the monastic opposition to Chalcedon whose monastery was in Maiuma. Severos commenced his monastic life under Abbot Theodore, Peter the Iberian's successor. Subsequently he and a companion decided on attempting a strict ascetic life in the region of Eleutheropolis, but this proved too much for their constitutions, and they were advised to move to the nearby monastery of Romanos. In due course Severos returned to Maiuma and began to attract disciples. Perhaps at this stage, c.500, he was ordained priest by bishop Epiphanius.

In 508, as a result of a campaign against the Miaphysite monasteries in the Gaza region led by the Egyptian monk Nephalius, under the auspices of Elias, patriarch of Jerusalem, Severos and his sympathizers were driven out of their monastery. Both Nephalius and Severos then travelled to Constantinople to put their respective cases. While Nephalius received support from Makedonios, the patriarch of Constantinople, Severos was able to win friends at the imperial court and thus successfully gained the support of the

emperor, Anastasius. Severos stayed on in the capital and it was probably he who drew up Anastasius' *Typos*, which interpreted the *Henotikon* in an openly anti-Chalcedonian sense.⁵ Severos' influence eventually enabled him and others to bring about the deposition of Makedonios on 6 August 511. Shortly after this Severos must have returned to the Orient, for he was present in October at a synod in Sidon, convoked by the emperor in the hope of bringing the different sides together. In the event, nothing was achieved and the imperial legate Eutropios had to disband the synod. The following year, however, saw the downfall of the pro-Chalcedon patriarch of Antioch, Flavian, and Severos was elected as his successor.

Severos was consecrated as patriarch of Antioch on 16 November 512, the chief consecrator being Philoxenos, bishop of Mabbug, who had been the moving force behind Flavian's deposition. To consolidate his position, Severos held a synod in Antioch in the spring of 513. During his six years on the throne of Antioch he had to face opposition from several different angles, both Dyophysite and Miaphysite, the latter consisting of the more rigorous and hard-line opposition to Chalcedon. While his relations with the patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria were good, Patriarch Elias of Jerusalem broke off communion with him, being supported in this by Sabbas, the powerful Palestinian monastic leader.

Some idea of the hectic nature of Severos' life during these years can be seen from the table, provided by Alpi,⁶ setting out the dates, locations, and topics of the 125 homilies that he preached between November 512 and September 518. Further evidence for his multifarious activities can be found in his correspondence.

The escape from Antioch in 518

The dramatic circumstances of Severos' flight from Antioch on Justin's accession in the late summer of 518 are told by Severos himself in an unpublished letter to an unknown recipient.⁷ At the end of the letter the exact date of his flight is given, 29 September 518, confirming some much later

⁵ For the theological issues involved, see Section 2 of the Introduction, below.

⁶ Alpi 2009, I, 187–91.

⁷ In Damascus, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate 12/18. See Vööbus 1975a; a forthcoming edition by Mor Sewerios Haza'il Soumi has been announced. SPB is most grateful to the late Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Ya'qub III, for the opportunity to copy some extracts upon which the summary account here is based. The letter is referred to by Evagrius, *HE* IV.4, where he says that it was addressed to 'some people of Antioch'.

sources. On Justin's accession, Vitalian,⁸ a bitter enemy of Severos,⁹ sent the *comes* Irenaeus¹⁰ with orders to capture him and cut out his tongue. Severos escaped from Antioch by night, travelling on foot to Seleucia, where he and a few companions hid in a tomb chamber during the daytime. Their hopes of getting a boat were foiled, and travelling on by night they reached the Orontes. Eventually finding a battered old boat to cross it, they hastened on in the direction of Bitylion, a little further to the south along the coast. Learning that some of Irenaeus' men were already there, they were guided by a monk from a monastery in Bitylion up a mountain, at times having to scramble up on their hands and knees. It being by then a Sunday, when they reached the top, after resting, they celebrated the pre-sanctified Liturgy, having brought the consecrated Host in a wooden container.¹¹ Having descended the mountain by moonlight, and reached the threshing floor of the monastery, they learnt that their pursuers were still not far off, so they had to ascend another mountain. Eventually contact was made with the crew of an Egyptian boat heading for Cilicia to load up with amphorae of wine. This took them to Cyprus, from where they eventually found another ship sailing for Egypt.

His last years in Egypt

Details concerning the last twenty years of Severos' life, all spent in Egypt apart from the visit to Constantinople in 535–36, are few and far between. When his huge correspondence (estimated as containing at least 3,759 letters!) was subsequently classified, it was arranged into three parts, 'before his Consecration' in 512, 'during his episcopacy', and 'after his expulsion' in 518. Only a small fraction of these letters survives, the most important group being the 'Sixth Book of Select Letters', consisting of 123 letters, translated into Syriac in AD 668/9; several of these belong to his time in Egypt and describe the difficult circumstances in which he was living there.

⁸ *PLRE* II, 1171–76 ('Vitalianus 2'). He rebelled against Anastasius, marching against Constantinople twice (513, 514).

⁹ Severos' Homily 45 celebrated the defeat of Vitalian, as did one of Severos' hymns (no. 262, ed. Brooks, PO 7.5: 298–99).

¹⁰ *PLRE* II, 625 ('Irenaeus 6'), citing Evagrius, *HE* IV.4 as the only other source mentioning him. The hymn entitled 'Admonition concerning Kalliopios the *topotērētēs* who oppressed him' may perhaps refer to this time: Severos, Hymn 273, ed. Brooks (PO 7.5: 721–22); this Kalliopios (*PLRE* II, 253, 'Calliopius 7') may well be the same person as the *patrikos* of this name (*PLRE* II, 252–53, 'Calliopius 6').

¹¹ *ma'na d-eshkar'a*; the word indicates a precious wood, but of uncertain identity.

His first ten years in Egypt were much taken up with controversy, both with ‘the Grammarian’ (the Chalcedonian John of Caesarea), and with his former friend, Julian of Halicarnassus, whose teaching concerning the incorruptibility of the flesh of the incarnate Christ found many adherents in Alexandria and elsewhere in Egypt. So strong was popular support for Julian’s teaching in Alexandria that the government had to intervene in 535 in order to eject the Julianist patriarch, Gaianos, and re-establish Theodosios (a supporter of Severos’ position) on the patriarchal throne. The Gaianites, however, made things so difficult for Theodosios that after a few years he retired to Constantinople for the rest of his life; there he became one of the chief spokesmen for the Miaphysite cause after the death of Severos.

At first Severos had stayed in the Enaton and Oktokaidekaton monasteries outside Alexandria,¹² but for much of the time he was forced to live a fugitive life, moving around from one place to another, even travelling as far south as Assiut;¹³ eventually he was able to take refuge from the harassment of his Julianist opponents in Xoïs (Sakha), in the Delta; there, according to the History of the Patriarchs (of Alexandria),¹⁴ he was cared for in his old age by a local man named Dorotheos.

Severos in Constantinople 535–36

Severos had declined to come to Constantinople for the Conversations, sponsored by Justinian in 532 or 533, between some Chalcedonian and Miaphysite bishops, a meeting for which, remarkably, subsequent accounts from both sides survive.¹⁵ Although Justinian’s conditions for the return of the Miaphysites to communion with the Chalcedonians were generous, they proved unacceptable in view of his demand that, if the Miaphysites were to return to their sees, they must sign the *libellus* that Pope Hormisdas had insisted on in 518 as a condition for the end of the break in relations between the see of Rome and that of Constantinople known as the ‘Acacian schism’ (482–519). No doubt it was Justinian (rather than Theodora, as Ps. Zacharias

12 For these monasteries, see the annotation to Zacharias, *VSev.* 13 and 123.

13 For this, see Crum 1922–23, 94–95.

14 Ed. Evetts, *PO* 1:4 (1907): 193–94; Dorotheos is also mentioned at the end of Athanasios’ *Life*.

15 The Chalcedonian account, by Innocentius of Maronia (in Latin) is printed in *ACO* IV.2: 169–84; the Miaphysite account (in Syriac) is published in Brock 1981 (a summary account was published earlier by Nau in *PO* 13: 192–96); the *Plerophoria* presented by the Miaphysite bishops is given in Ps. Zacharias, *HE* IX.15.

suggests) who requested Severos a few years later to come to Constantinople. The date of his arrival is uncertain, possibly in the winter of 534/5, but more likely in the late summer of 535, when Anthimos had already been elected patriarch of Constantinople in succession to Epiphanius, who had died on 5 June 535. Anthimos' subsequent entering into communion with Severos and Theodosios, the Miaphysite patriarch of Alexandria, resulted in a dramatic turn of events. It so happened that Pope Agapetus, who had been alerted to this development by Ephraim, patriarch of Antioch, was sent by the Ostrogoth king Theodahad as an ambassador to Justinian at this point, arriving in the capital in early March 536. Deposing Anthimos almost at once on technical grounds, Agapetus then proceeded to consecrate Menas as the new patriarch of Constantinople, on 13 March 536. He next set in motion the summoning of a synod in order to look into Anthimos' doctrinal position, but his own death, on 22 April, prevented his participating in the synod itself. The first four sessions were all held in May 536 (on the 2nd, 6th, 10th, and 21st), and ended in the condemnation of Anthimos. At the end of the fourth session there were clamours that Severos, too, should be condemned, and this duly happened in the fifth session, held on 4 June.¹⁶ Protected by Justinian's initial promise to him for his safety, Severos was able to return unharmed to Egypt, travelling by way of Chios. On 6 August 536 Justinian confirmed the synod (with whose outcome he may not have been too happy), and in his Novella 42 he ordered Severos' writings to be consigned to burning.

Severos, by now about 70 years old, lived on for another year and a half, cared for in Xoïs by Dorotheos, and finally dying in 538, on 8 February, the date on which he is still commemorated in the Coptic as well as the Syrian Orthodox Church. Dorotheos' kindness towards the aged patriarch is recorded by his appearance in a splendid eighteenth-century wall painting in one of the churches in Sadad (near Homs, Syria), where he is depicted beside the much larger portrayal of Severos.

16 See also below, on the life of Zacharias.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

<i>Severos' life</i>	<i>Main extant writings</i>	<i>Important events</i>
		431 Council of Ephesus 451 Council of Chalcedon
c.465 born, Pisidia		474–91 Zeno 482 <i>Henotikon</i> 482–519 Acacian schism
c.485–86 study in Alexandria 487–92 study (law) in Berytos ?488/90 conversion and baptism, Tripoli		491–518 Anastasius 491 death of Peter the Iberian
492 becomes a monk in Maiuma		
508–11 in Constantinople	<i>against Nephaios Philalethes</i>	
512 (16 Nov.) becomes patriarch of Antioch	512–18 <i>125 Cathedral Homilies</i>	
	515–19 <i>Letters to Sergios</i>	513–15 revolt of Vitalian
518 (29 Sep.) flight to Egypt	<i>polemic against (John) the Grammarian</i> <i>polemic against Julian of Halicarnassus</i>	518–27 Justin I 518 end of Acacian schism
		527–65 Justinian 532/3 Conversations with Miaphysite bishops
535–36 in Constantinople		535–36 Anthimos, patriarch of Constantinople 535–66 Theodosios, patriarch of Alexandria
536 return to Egypt		536 Synod of Constantinople: condemnation of Anthimos and Severos
538 (8 Feb.) death		

2. THE MAIN THEOLOGICAL ISSUES¹⁷

There were two major focal points in the christological controversies of the time: the Council of Chalcedon (451), and the *Henotikon*, issued by Zeno in 482. The purpose of both of these had been to settle controversy, but neither has ever achieved this aim. There was opposition from the beginning to the Council of Chalcedon's christological definition of faith, and in particular to the phrase that the incarnate Christ was one hypostasis 'in two natures' (the draft's 'out of two natures' would have been much more acceptable to many). The roots of the dispute lay in two different understandings of the term 'nature' (*physis*): to supporters of Chalcedon's Dyophysite formula, *physis* was closer in meaning to *ousia*, 'essence, being', whereas to the Miaphysites, who insisted that the incarnate Christ was one nature, the term *physis* was very close in sense to *hypostasis*; thus, from the Miaphysite point of view, the Chalcedonian definition was 'Nestorian',¹⁸ implying that the Son of God and the son of Mary were separate subjects. A further objection to the Council was seen in its acceptance of Pope Leo's 'Tome' and the Letter of Ibas (bishop of Edessa), both of which gave (in Miaphysite eyes) an undue and improper separation between Christ's miracles and his normal physical activities of eating, sleeping etc. (In due course the Greek Chalcedonian tradition also rejected the Letter of Ibas, at the Council of Constantinople in 553.)

Because of the controversy that the Council had stirred up, in 482 the emperor Zeno issued the *Henotikon*, a theological statement that sought to resolve the problem by re-affirming the faith as expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and avoiding the ambiguous (and hence controversial) term *physis*, as well as any mention of the Council of Chalcedon (or of Leo's Tome). The *Henotikon* gave rise to a whole range of different reactions: strong supporters of the Dyophysite position, such as popes Felix

17 See also the Glossary, and annotation to Zacharias, *VSev.* 157 (*Henotikon*), 158 (Trisagion)

18 In the polemical literature each side accused the other of heretical positions that in fact they did not hold: while Miaphysites called Dyophysites 'Nestorians', Chalcedonians called Miaphysites 'Eutychians' – whereas the mainstream Miaphysites, including Severos, all regularly condemned the teaching of Eutyches (it is for this reason that it is important to distinguish between Miaphysites (of whom Severos was one) and Monophysites, since the latter term is frequently understood to represent the position of Eutyches, namely that Christ is consubstantial with the Father but *not* with us). Modern ecumenical dialogue has recognized that, rightly understood, both the Chalcedonian and the Miaphysite positions can be considered orthodox.

and Gelasius, who were insistent on an explicit affirmation of Chalcedon and of Leo's Tome, condemned it (thus giving rise to the 'Acacian schism' with Constantinople, 486–519). For many in the East, however, the *Henotikon* was an acceptable solution, although the more ardent supporters of the Miaphysite position were not satisfied with it either, but for the opposite reason: it did not openly condemn Chalcedon. By contrast, other Miaphysites, such as Severos and Peter Mongos, the patriarch of Alexandria, were content with it, considering it implicitly to be a condemnation of the Council.

There were three other matters in particular that also proved highly controversial.¹⁹ The liturgical formula 'Holy God, holy Mighty, holy Immortal', known as the Trisagion, which emerged in the fifth century and is still found in all Eastern liturgical traditions (but survives only vestigially in the West), was capable of two different interpretations: in Syria it was understood as being addressed to the Son, and to bring this out Peter the Fuller supplied a supplementary phrase, 'who was crucified for us'. In Constantinople, however, the liturgical formula was considered to be addressed either to the three Persons of the Trinity in turn, or to the Trinity as a whole, and so for them the supplementary words were totally inappropriate. Trouble arose when the two different geographical traditions met, as they did in 510 in Constantinople when monks from Syria/Palestine, who had come there in support of Severos, sang the Trisagion with the additional phrase; not surprisingly the local monks of the capital, in particular the Akoimetai or 'Sleepless' monks (who were strongly pro-Chalcedonian) took offence, and so what had started out as a geographical difference in usage soon became a hallmark of doctrinal allegiance.

The so-called theopaschite formula, 'One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh', became popular in the early sixth century among those Chalcedonians²⁰ who wanted to obviate any strictly Dyophysite understanding of the Chalcedonian formula that might seek to make a separation between the Word and Jesus in connection with the suffering on the Cross. Controversy over the theopaschite formula first surfaced in 519, but in the early 530s, when Justinian was seeking to win over the Miaphysites, he made use of it when he issued his Theopaschite Edict in 533.²¹

The third matter concerns the *libellus*, or Formula, of Pope Hormisdas; this was originally composed in 515, proclaiming Chalcedon as normative, and condemning a number of prominent Eastern bishops, including

19 A helpful and clear account of these can be found in Menze 2008.

20 Often called 'Neo-Chalcedonians' in the modern literature.

21 To which Pope Agapetus consented in 536, when he was in Constantinople.

Akakios of Constantinople, as well as both Nestorius and Eutyches. On Justin's accession in 518, and his active promotion of Chalcedon, Pope Hormisdas made the acceptance of his *libellus* a condition for the ending of the Acacian schism. While this also caused problems for some Chalcedonians, its enforcement on all bishops and clergy by Justin and Justinian immediately marginalized all those opposed in any way to Chalcedon. It was this requirement that finally led to the breakdown in the Conversations of 532/3, despite the fact that Justinian otherwise made a number of important theological concessions to the Miaphysite bishops.

3. THE BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIALS FOR THE LIFE OF SEVEROS

A. 'Lives'

1. Zacharias *scholastikos* (BHO 1060; translated here). This is an apologia written in response to a pamphlet, rather than a proper biography or Life, and it covers only the period up to his election as patriarch of Antioch in 512. Originally written in Greek, it survives only in a Syriac translation that is preserved in a single manuscript, Berlin, ms Sachau 321 (*Verzeichnis* Nr. 26), ff.109r–135r. The manuscript, a collection of Lives, was written in the monastery of Psilta, or 'the Quarry', near Tella d-Mauzlat = Constantina (modern Viranshehir); it is dated to 1052 of the Seleucid era 'of the Greeks', corresponding to AD 740/1.

The standard edition is that by M.A. Kugener, accompanied by a French translation, in *Patrologia Orientalis* 2, fasc.1 (1904); this replaced the earlier edition by M. Spanuth, *Das Leben des Severus von Antiochien in syrischer Übersetzung* (Göttingen, 1893). Spanuth's edition served as the basis for the French translation by F. Nau in the *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 4 (1899): 343–53, 543–71, and 5 (1900): 74–98.²² The only previous complete English translation is that by Lena Ambjörn, *The Life of Severus by Zachariah of Mytilene* (Piscataway, NJ, 2008); for her bilingual edition Kugener's text has been reproduced. Several earlier partial English translations exist; in chronological order these are by: R. Darling Young, in V. Wimbush (ed.), *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity: a Sourcebook* (Minneapolis, 1990), 312–28; this covers sections 1–11, 59–73, 103–05, 130–31, 135–37,

²² Curiously incorporated into a series entitled 'Opuscles maronites'. The French translation by Kugener is much to be preferred.

153–54, 158 (part), and 160 of the present translation. F. Trombley, in his *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c.370–529*, II (Leiden, 1994), 1–51, gives excerpts in a rather free rendering of sections 16, 18–19, parts of 20–23, 26–27, part of 29, 30–31, part of 32, part of 46–47, part of 51, part of 54–55, 60, parts of 66–67, part of 69, 75, parts of 80–81, 82, part of 83, parts of 88–91, part of 94, parts of 97–98, part of 101. J.F. Coakley, in J.W. Coakley and A. Sterk (eds), *Readings in World Christian History*, I (Maryknoll, NY, 2004), 176–83; this covers sections 59–60, 74–84, and 141–60.

In the present translation new section numbers have been introduced, though Kugener's page numbers (hitherto the standard form of reference) have been indicated in square brackets, and Nau's section numbers in braces.²³ Whereas Ambjörn's translation is accompanied by very sparse annotation and lacks any indexes, the present translation offers the reader both.

2. Anonymous, attributed to John, abbot of the monastery of Beth Aptonia (*BHO* 1061; translated here). The attribution in the manuscripts is probably incorrect and the true author remains unknown, but he was probably a monk of the monastery of Qenneshre, writing not long after the death of Severos.²⁴ This work, too, was originally written in Greek (addressed to a certain Dometios), but it is preserved only in a Syriac translation made by the 'Abbas Mar Sergios son of Karya' (who is otherwise unknown). In contrast to Zacharias' Life, that attributed to John is preserved in a number of different manuscripts, including Berlin Sachau 321 (ff.135r–147v), dated AD 740/1, where it follows immediately after Zacharias. Other known manuscripts are British Library, Add. 17,203, ff.1–16, of the eleventh century (Wright, *Catalogue* no. 980, p. 1151); Damascus, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate ms 12/19 (no. 35), and 12/20 (no. 37), both homiliaries of the early eleventh century;²⁵ and a homiliary, dated 1724, preserved in ms. 86 in the Konat Library, Pampakuda (Kerala). A short excerpt is also to be found in Add. 14,731, f.31r, of the eleventh century. It was from John's Life that excerpts were included in the late eighth-century Zuqnin Chronicle²⁶ and in the Chronicle by Michael the Great (IX.21).²⁷

²³ It should be noted that Nau's translation has no section 16, and that his sections 30–33 are taken from the Anonymous Life attributed to John.

²⁴ For the problems surrounding the attribution, see Section 5 below.

²⁵ Lavenant et al. 1994, 606, 616; cf. also Vööbus 1975c, 335–37.

²⁶ Ed. Chabot, II, 12:17–13:25; tr. Harrak 1999, 48–50.

²⁷ Ed. Chabot IV, 280–81; tr. II, 195–96; quoting PO 2: 253–56.

John's Life was edited (with French translation) by Kugener in *Patrologia Orientalis* 2.3 (1908), on the basis of Sachau 321 and Add. 17,203. Kugener also made use of the excerpts in Add. 14,731 and in the two Chronicles. There are two partial earlier translations: in French, by F. Nau, in *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 5 (1900), 293–302, covering Severos' life subsequent to his elevation to the episcopacy in 512 (section 48 onwards in the translation below); and in German, by M. Peisker, accompanied by a commentary.²⁸

The authority and popularity of John's Life is further indicated by the fact that very short excerpts from it, often just single words, feature in some of the so-called 'Masoretic' manuscripts which cover certain patristic texts as well as biblical ones.²⁹ A good example is to be found in British Library, Add. 7,183, f.122, which has a short section headed 'Terms (*shmahe*) from the history of the holy Mar Severos, the Pisidian'. Many, but by no means all, of the words quoted are Greek words or place names, provided with vocalization; sometimes the Greek form is given in the margin (in some cases clearly retroverted from the Syriac form). All the words can be identified as coming from John's Life, covering pages 127–79 of Kugener's edition.

3. Athanasios, *Life of Severos* (BHO 1062). This survives only in Coptic (fragments), in Arabic, and in Ethiopic. The Arabic intermediary between Coptic and Ethiopic has only recently been published by Youssef, with an English translation, in *Patrologia Orientalis* 49.4 (2004); previously the only complete text of this Life had been the Ethiopic, edited by Goodspeed in *Patrologia Orientalis* 4.6 (1908). A convenient list of the Coptic (Sa'idic) fragments is given by Youssef (p. 377); many of these had already been gathered by Crum in Goodspeed's edition of the Ethiopic,³⁰ later supplemented by Orlandi.³¹ It is likely that the original language was Greek.³²

The identity of the author is unclear: at the beginning he claims that his grandfather (also called Athanasios) knew Severos' alleged grandfather, the bishop of Sozopolis. The author is thus claiming to be a contemporary

²⁸ Peisker 1903, 8–60.

²⁹ For these, see A. Juckel in *GEDSH* 276–79, and Loopstra 2008.

³⁰ PO 4.6 (1909): 10–22.

³¹ Orlandi 1968, 356–73, 393–97 (Latin tr.). It should be noted that the Coptic sometimes preserves names that have been lost in the Arabic: thus it gives the names of Severos' 'four friends' at the shrine of St Leontios as Priskos, Ouranikos, Eustathios, and Dionysios (they are left anonymous in the Arabic text).

³² Thus Baumstark 1922, 185; Barsoum 2003, 319, speaks of the lost original as having been in Syriac, but the existence of Sa'idic Coptic fragments makes this very unlikely. On this life, see Brakmann 2004.

of Severos himself, but this cannot possibly be the case, given the various anachronisms. Modern scholarship has usually attributed the work to the Syrian Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, Athanasios Gammala ('the camel-driver', 594–630/1).³³ An interest in Severos' time in Egypt strongly suggests that the work, often of an encomiastic character, originated in that country, and possibly in the Enaton monastery, where this Life states that Severos' body was preserved. A surprising feature is the considerable amount of space accorded to the affair of patriarch Makedonios (sections 31–39, 47–97 in Youssef's edition of the Arabic). A detailed study of the sources used remains a task for the future.

4. Giwargis (George), bishop of the Arab tribes, Verse Homily on Severos. This biographical narrative poem of 1,050 lines, modelled on the structure of a Greek funeral oration (*epitaphios logos*), was the work of the scholar bishop Giwargis (George, d. 724), and has been edited, with English translation, by K. McVey, in CSCO Scr. Syri 216–17 (1993). Its main source of information was evidently the Life by John (there is no evidence that Giwargis knew of Zacharias' 'Life'). McVey considers it 'probable' that Giwargis also made use of the Life by Athanasios (whom she identifies as Athanasios Gammala), but leaves the matter open.³⁴ The matter now needs to be re-examined in the light of the publication of the Arabic translation of Athanasios' Life. Giwargis also made direct use of several of Severos' own works.

5. Quryaqos (Cyriacus) of Tagrit, Life of Severos. Attention was drawn to this work, in a manuscript in Chicago (Oriental Institute A.12,008, a homiliary of the thirteenth century) by A. Vööbus.³⁵ The author, Quryaqos, was Syrian Orthodox patriarch of Antioch (793–817), and the author of a number of other works.³⁶ This Life, which in fact is called a *Turgama*, or homily, still awaits publication.

B. Other materials

Among Severos' own writings, it is above all in his letters and homilies that a certain amount of incidental autobiographical information can be found.

³³ Thus Baumstark 1922, 185; McVey, in her translation of George's Homily, xi.

³⁴ Translation volume, xv–xvi.

³⁵ Vööbus 1975/6.

³⁶ These have now been published by M. Oez, *Cyriacus of Tagrit and his Book on Divine Providence* (2 vols, Piscataway, NJ, 2012).

Further information is to be found in various historical texts, notably the Ecclesiastical History attributed to Zacharias;³⁷ many of these have conveniently been collected together by Kugener at the end of his edition of the Life attributed to John. A number of brief summaries dealing with Severos' life are known, several of which are published by Kugener (pp. 317–22); a further note telling of his origin and going on to explain how he came to write against (John) the Grammarian is to be found in a manuscript in St Mark's Monastery, Jerusalem.³⁸

A number of hymns in honour of Severos have come down in Syriac and in Coptic, at least some of which were originally composed in Greek. Among the Syriac hymns translated from Greek are three by John, 'the first Abbot of Qenneshre', in other words, the same person as the alleged author of the Life.³⁹ As Lucchesi has recently shown, a Bohairic fragment on Severos, previously thought to have been part of the Life by Athanasios, in fact is based on one of the hymns.⁴⁰ An Arabic homily on Severos by an unnamed bishop of Assiut has recently been published by Y.N. Youssef, in *Patrologia Orientalis* 50.1 (2006).

4. ZACHARIAS

Identity

Zacharias is variously referred to as the 'scholastikos', the 'rhetor', or '(the bishop) of Mytilene'. 'Scholastikos' is the title given to him in the manuscripts of the 'Life' of Severos and of the Life of Isaias, and likewise in the Greek manuscripts of the dialogue *Ammonios*. 'Zacharias the scholastikos' is also how Severos refers to him in his Letter 34 (PO 12.2, 275). By contrast, Zacharias as the author of the Ecclesiastical History is regularly referred to as the 'rhetor', both in the summary at the beginning of Book IV of Ps.Zacharias' Ecclesiastical History (*mlila*; Greatrex 2011, 130), and in the various references to him and his work in Evagrius's Ecclesiastical History (*rhetōr*; II.2, 10; III, 5, 9).

³⁷ Translation in Greatrex 2011.

³⁸ The title is given in Dolabani 1994, 282. The background to his work against John the Grammarian is given by Severos himself in his Letter 34 (of the *Collection of Letters*, PO 12.2).

³⁹ These were edited by Brooks, PO 7.5 (1911): 653–57; the texts are also provided by Kugener in PO 2.3 (1904): 327–31/[243–47]; a further hymn on Severos is by an anonymous poet of Alexandria.

⁴⁰ Lucchesi 2008, 178–85. For the Coptic hymnography on Severos, see Youssef 2004.

‘Zacharias, bishop of Mytilene’ is found in connection with the dramatic events of 535–36 when Severos came to Constantinople at Justinian’s invitation – and to the emperor’s embarrassment won over the patriarch of Constantinople, Anthimos, to his own side; in the proceedings of the ensuing synod in 536 (instigated by the visiting Pope Agapetus) reference is made to a ‘Zacharias, bishop of the metropolis of the Mytilenians’ as attending the first four sessions (on 2, 6, 10, and 21 May 536),⁴¹ during the last of which he was sent (with some others) to fetch Anthimos, only to report back that he could not be found.⁴² The name of Zacharias is absent, however, from the list of those present for the fifth session (4 June)⁴³ which was concerned with the case of Severos and ended with the latter’s condemnation.

Two sources definitely bring together either Zacharias *scholastikos* or Zacharias *rhetor* with Zacharias, bishop of Mytilene. The former is to be found in an introduction, by Arethas of Caesarea (dated 932), describing how Zacharias’ work against the Manichaeans came to be written, in response to a pamphlet that turned up in 527 on a bookstall in the Royal Stoa in Constantinople (as was the case with the pamphlet which Zacharias’ ‘Life’ of Severos aimed to refute!) Arethas describes Zacharias as ‘still a *scholastikos* and advocate’ working in the capital but who was later to become bishop of Mytilene.⁴⁴ Comparable to this is the combination of ‘rhetor (*mlila*) and bishop of Mytilene’ to be found in the Commentary on the Gospel of John by Dionysios bar Salibi (d. 1171), when referring to a passage in Ps. Zacharias, *HE* VIII.5.⁴⁵

While the identity of Zacharias *scholastikos* and Zacharias *rhetor* is both certain and unproblematic, to find the ardent young anti-Chalcedonian student in Berytos, who was not in communion with the local bishop and then had a successful legal career in Constantinople, eventually turn into an evidently Chalcedonian bishop of Mytilene is surprising to say the least. Modern scholars have held very different opinions on the question, but most now accept the case that Honigsmann made in 1953 for accepting their identity⁴⁶ (with the added possibility that Zacharias might also have been the

41 *ACO* III, 126, 154, 162, 170. A convenient table setting out the different sessions can be found in Millar 2008, 72–73.

42 *ACO* III, 154, 160.

43 *ACO* III, 27–29 (those who were present) and 113–19 (those signing the condemnation); see further below, on Zacharias’ life.

44 The Greek text is given in Honigsmann 1953, 198, n. 3.

45 Ed. Lejoly, II, 173 (Mytilene has there been corrupted to the more familiar Melitene). The passage is also cited in Gwynn 1909, 47.

46 Thus, for example, Wegenast 1967; *PLRE* II, 1194–95 (‘Zacharias 4’); Destephen 2008,

same person as Zacharias, the brother of Procopius of Gaza).⁴⁷ If the identification of the *scholastikos* with the bishop is indeed correct, one would dearly like to know what happened when the two old student friends, now on different sides, met up again in 535 when Severos came to Constantinople. In particular it must have been a very bitter moment for Zacharias when, at the end of the fourth session of the Synod in 536, after the condemnation of Anthimos, there were clamours to have Severos condemned as well.⁴⁸ It is significant that one looks in vain for Zacharias' name, not only among those present at the fifth session, concerning the case of Severos, as noted above, but also among the names of those who signed at the end of the fourth session in support of the condemnation of Anthimos.⁴⁹ These absences are surely telling and strongly suggest that Honigmann was indeed correct.

Life

On the assumption that all three titles refer to the same person, an outline of Zacharias' life can be constructed, the earlier part largely on the basis of his own works, and in particular, the information he gives about himself in his 'Life' of Severos.⁵⁰ Born in Maiuma, probably in the latter half of the 460s, and possibly as the brother of Procopius, it is likely that he first studied at the famous school of nearby Gaza before moving on (c.485) to continue his studies in Alexandria. There he attended the lectures of Ammonios, among others; he also became a member of a group of ardent Christians, known as the *philoponoi*. It was during his time in Alexandria that he first met Severos, a fellow student, who came from Pisidia. It would appear that their friendship was not particularly close at this stage, for Zacharias describes how he was pleasantly surprised that Severos should remember him when he arrived in Beirut a year after Severos had already started on his legal studies there. But a close friendship then developed, and Zacharias got Severos seriously interested in Christianity, recommending to him books to read. When Severos eventually decided to be baptized, Zacharias would have been the obvious person to act as his sponsor, but he declined on the

960–73; Greatrex 2011, 4.

47 For Procopius of Gaza, see *PLRE* II, 921–22 ('Procopius 8'); Honigmann only mentions this possibility in passing, and *PLRE* II, 1193–95 lists them as separate ('Zacharias 4' and 'Zacharias 1').

48 *ACO* III, 181: 'Now (go on and) anathematize Severos the Manichaeon', etc.

49 *ACO* III, 182–86.

50 A more detailed account can be found in Destephen 2008, 960–73.

grounds that he was not in communion with the local bishop, and so another prominent member of the *philoponoi* took on that role. Several members of the group, including in due course Severos, were drawn to the monastic life, but Zacharias himself had cold feet and returned to fulfil his parents' ambitions for him by taking up a legal career in Constantinople.

While he was practising law in Constantinople Zacharias had the opportunity to meet up with Severos again during the latter's extended visit to the capital, 508–11, and they clearly continued to remain in close touch, even after Severos' deposition in 518, for in one of his letters⁵¹ Severos expresses the hope the 'wise and Christ-loving Zacharias the *scholastikos*' will take a look at his extensive work 'against the heretical fatuity of the wicked Grammarian' (sc. John of Caesarea).⁵² When Justinian came to the throne in 527 Zacharias was evidently a *scholastikos* of some standing and importance in the capital, to judge by the prefatory notice by Arethas to his refutation of the Manichaean pamphlet that turned up at the time of Justinian's anti-Manichaean legislation at the beginning of his reign.

When and how Zacharias became bishop of Mytilene is completely unknown, but one might speculate that this was in the early 530s when Justinian was making various efforts to win over the Miaphysites,⁵³ first with the (unsuccessful) Conversations of 532/3, and then with the Theopaschite Edict of late 533, and his adaptation of a theopaschite hymn by Severos, which was introduced into the Liturgy in 535.⁵⁴ Appointment as bishop would normally imply the signing of Hormisdas' *libellus*, but for out-of-the-way dioceses matters may have been relaxed to some extent. Since Mytilene was one of the places later visited by Jacob Baradaeus,⁵⁵ it is quite likely that there was already a Miaphysite presence there in the 530s, and so, from Justinian's point of view, Zacharias might have seemed a suitable candidate,⁵⁶ provided he agreed to accept Chalcedon in the sense

51 Letter 34, to Elisha, in the *Collection of Letters* (PO 12.2: 275)

52 According to Alpi 2009, I, 58, the *contra Grammaticum* belongs to the first half of the 520s, though Severos was already working on it earlier.

53 It is quite striking that the Paschal Chronicle (Whitby and Whitby 1989, 128) states that, after an earthquake in 533, the populace gathered in the Forum of Constantine and chanted the Trisagion with the addition 'who was crucified for us', the formula used in Syria.

54 For this hymn, see Bühring and Uhlig 1988.

55 Life of Jacob Baradaeus, ed. Brooks, PO 19.2 (1924): 500/154, and 'Spurious Life', *ibid.*, 585/239. There would have been no reason for Jacob to visit Mytilene if there had been no Miaphysite sympathizers there.

56 He is the only known bishop of Mytilene recorded for the sixth century: see Fedalto 1988, I, 215.

of not actively condemning it (an option offered to the Miaphysite bishops in 532/3 – though there the *libellus* was demanded if they were to regain their sees). In any case, however this may have come about, Zacharias is recorded as bishop of Mytilene present in May 536 for the first four sessions of the Synod of Constantinople. That Zacharias was not at all happy with the outcome of the synod is strongly suggested by the absence of his name from the signatories of the condemnation of Anthimos at the end of the fourth session (which he otherwise attended), and his complete absence from the following fifth session which ended in the condemnation of his old fellow student Severos. The outcome of the synod must have been a bitter blow for him, as it also was for any further possibility of reconciliation between Chalcedonians and Miaphysites. How Zacharias reacted, and when he died, remain completely unknown.

Writings

It may have been while he was still in Berytos that Zacharias wrote a *Life of Peter the Iberian* (almost entirely lost; the extant one is probably by John Rufus), and a *Life of Isaïas*, another monastic leader (CPG 7000 and 7001, respectively). The dates of his other works remain unclear; the *Ecclesiastical History*, sometimes also referred to as a *Chronicle* (CPG 6995) goes up to 491, but the date of completing the work could be quite a number of years later; the dedication to a high official, the *cubicularius* Eupraxios,⁵⁷ strongly suggests he was already settled in Constantinople. His philosophical dialogue *Ammonios* (CPG 6996) is usually dated to the 490s, before he left for Constantinople, largely on the grounds that it draws on Aeneas of Gaza's dialogue *Theophrastos*. The 'Life' of Severos obviously dates from after 512, but whether it was written during Severos' active tenure of the patriarchate of Antioch (as is usually assumed), or belongs to the early 520s (thus Watts 2005) is not clear. Zacharias' two short works against the Manichaeans (CPG 6997–98) must date from the time of Justinian's anti-Manichaean legislation at the beginning of his reign.⁵⁸ The description of the circumstances that led Zacharias to compose the *Antirrhēsis* (CPG 6998), described by Arethas (see above), are remarkably similar to those which led Zacharias to compose the 'Life' of Severos.

⁵⁷ For Eupraxios see the note to Zacharias, *VSev.* 146.

⁵⁸ Lieu 1994, 200–15

The 'Life' of Severos and its character

Although Zacharias' work has traditionally been called a 'Life', this is in fact very misleading,⁵⁹ for it is by no means an ordinary biography but rather a response to a scurrilous pamphlet put out by an opponent of Severos, claiming that in his student days in Berytos Severos had participated in pagan sacrifices. Zacharias, who had been a fellow student of Severos both in Alexandria and then in Berytos, had come across this pamphlet in Constantinople where he was practising as a lawyer at the time, and was determined to refute it. His work is entitled in the single manuscript (dated 740/1) that preserves it as 'A narrative of the manner of life of the holy Mar Severos, patriarch of Antioch', though this is unlikely to have been the original title. In his work he aims to refute the pamphlet's charge by two different means. First, he provides two extended examples of students, one in Alexandria and the other in Berytos, who *were* involved in pagan practices or in magic, whereas Severos was not, and in the second case was acting as an adviser to the Christians whose aim was to expose any magic practices. The case in Alexandria concerned a pagan student, Paralios, who was eventually won over to Christianity, having reacted against paganism (12–58). Zacharias' justification for the long digression (59) is rather weak, and some have even supposed that Zacharias has simply reused an earlier independent Life of Paralios.⁶⁰ Zacharias' second example (74–102), taken from student life in Berytos, concerns some fellow law students (and others) who dabbled in magic practices, among whom Severos again was distinctly *not* numbered.

Zacharias' second line of defence was to portray Severos as having indeed been seriously interested in Christianity, though his concentration was so focused on his studies in Berytos that he had not yet committed himself to being baptized. This only came about after he had finished his studies, when he was finally won over by the zeal of his Christian friends, of whom Zacharias was one.

Zacharias could hardly have failed to be aware that Severos came from a non-Christian family but, while he himself never specifically denies Severos' pagan origins,⁶¹ he (no doubt deliberately) leaves his readers with

59 Nevertheless, for convenience, it is retained here, although between inverted commas. As Garitte 1966, 340, rightly said, Zacharias' work is 'nullement une biographie, mais une apologie'.

60 See Greatrex 2011, 14.

61 As Bauer (1967, 215), who was writing before the Coptic translation of Severos' Homily 27 had been published, already pointed out, there are in fact sufficient indications in Zacharias' 'Life' to show that Severos was indeed of pagan background.

the impression that his hero came from a Christian background; he does this by quoting hearsay ('they say', 'some people say') that Severos' grandfather had been bishop of Sozopolis (8), and that Severos' baptism was delayed until he was grown up owing to a local custom in his homeland (9). In the *Life* by John (which clearly knows Zacharias' work) hearsay has become fact, and this process of suppression of any memory of Severos' pagan background eventually impinged on the transmission of Severos' own works, most notably in the case of his Homily 27, which he delivered on 18 June 513 at the shrine of St Leontios where he had earlier been baptized: as has been already indicated above, the Syriac translation of this homily in its revised version by Jacob of Edessa has completely removed all the references that Severos made to his own pagan past, and it is only thanks to the uncensored Coptic version of the homily that Severos' original wording has been preserved.

Summary of the contents of Zacharias' 'Life' of Severos

- 1–6** The initial request to Zacharias (in the form of a dialogue)
- 7–8** Severos' origins and family background
- 9–10** His studies in Alexandria
- 11** His friends direct him to Christian authors.
- 12–58** Digression: the Paralios affair
 - 12–13** Paralios' family background
 - 14–16** Paralios in Alexandria
 - 17–19** The episode of Asklepiodotos and the baby
 - 20–24** Paralios' search for the truth of the matter
 - 25–27** Paralios, having turned against paganism, is beaten up
 - 28–32** He is rescued and taken to the Enaton monastery; the bishop and the city authorities are notified
 - 33–43** The expedition to Menuthis in search of the idols
 - 44–45** The effect of the news in Alexandria
 - 46–48** The return to Alexandria with the idols; their public burning
 - 49–50** The affair of Asklepiodotos is investigated
 - 51–53** Paralios is baptized
 - 54–56** Paralios' concern for his remaining brothers in Caria (cf. also 58)
 - 57–58** Paralios adopts a monastic life; his death
- 59** Return to Severos; the relevance of the preceding digression
- 60–61** Severos expresses an interest in Christianity to Zacharias
- 62** Severos' move to Berytos a year before Zacharias

- 63–65** Zacharias meets up, once in Berytos, with Severos who again expresses an interest in Christianity
- 66–69** Zacharias urges Severos to get baptized, and in the meantime he suggests a practical course of life for him, and a shared course of reading
- 70–73** The example of Evagrius, who acted as head of a group of like-minded students
- 74–102** The offensive against magic and books of magic
- 74** Other law students go in for magic
- 75–76** The case of a proposed ritual murder that is foiled
- 77–84** The search for the magic books of John of Thebes
- 85–86** Kosmas the *paramonarios* is asked to help
- 88–92** A further hunt for magic books; **89** Leontios' deception; **90** Chrysaorios
- 93** Severos' role
- 94–99** A further deception, with Chrysaorios as the victim
- 100** Leontios' baptism
- 101** Chrysaorios' divine punishment
- 102** Apologia for these sections on magic
- 103–16** Events leading up to Severos' baptism in Tripolis, and his return to Berytos
- 103** Severos' proficiency in spiritual knowledge
- 104** Evagrius reproaches Zacharias for not urging Severos to be baptized
- 105** Severos wishes to complete his studies first, but is then persuaded; he asks Zacharias to be his sponsor, but he declines for specified reasons
- 107** Severos asks Evagrius instead
- 108** Zacharias urges Evagrius to accept
- 109** Plans for Severos' baptism at the shrine of St Leontios in Tripolis
- 110–11** Severos receives instruction from the monk John
- 112** Preparations for the baptism
- 113–14** Severos' baptism
- 115–16** His return to Berytos; his rule of life there
- 117–24** The lure of the monastic life
- 117–19** Evagrius draws Anastos and Elisha to the monastic life with Peter the Iberian
- 120–24** The death of Peter the Iberian; **121–22** his successors, John and Theodoros; Evagrius urges others to join them, including Zacharias, who ends up returning to Berytos, where he continues studying with Severos
- 125** Topics passed over
- 126** Severos' assiduousness in studying law

- 127–28** Severos decides to return to his country to seek employment there, but he first goes with Zacharias to Tripolis, Emesa and Jerusalem
- 129** Severos sets off home, entrusting his belongings and servants to Zacharias; first, however, he visits Evagrius and the followers of Peter the Iberian; his change of plan and decision to become a monk
- 130** Description of life in the monastery of Peter the Iberian
- 131** Severos instructs Zacharias to send his belongings and servants back home
- 132** Severos is joined by Stephanos
- 133** Zacharias returns home, and ends up in Constantinople
- 134** The death of Evagrius
- 135–36** Severos and Anastos live as hermits, but fall ill; their rescue by the abbot of the monastery of Romanos
- 137–39** Severos' move to Maiuma; he attracts disciples, **138** one of whom is Peter from Caesarea
- 140** Severos and Peter are ordained priests
- 141–47** The case of Nephalios
- 141–42** The wider ecclesiastical background
- 143–44** Nephalios accepts Chalcedon, and turns against the monks of Gaza
- 145–47** As a result Severos goes to Constantinople where he seeks out Zacharias and John; he defends himself against the accusation of Eutychianism, and refutes, with his *Philalethes*, the Chalcedonian florilegium of texts from Cyril of Alexandria
- 148** Other matters passed over
- 149** Flavian of Antioch
- 150** Severos' labours for the union of the Churches
- 151** His disciple, Peter, reminds him to return to his monastery
- 152** The affair of Makedonios (cf. also **157**)
- 153–54** Severos is appointed to Antioch
- 155–56** Barsauma in Persia
- 157** On the *Henotikon*; Makedonios and Flavian turn against it
- 158** Zacharias' letter to Severos on his appointment; the opposition of Epiphanius and Julian to him
- 159** His enthronement homily
- 160** Conclusion: the rest is for the people of Antioch to tell

5. ANONYMOUS LIFE (ATTRIBUTED TO JOHN OF BETH APHTONIA)

The author

To understand the authorship of the Life of Severos attributed to John of Beth Aphthonia, one needs to grasp a few basic points about the work itself:

- The Life was written anonymously.
- It was addressed to a monk of the monastery of Beth Aphthonia called Dometios.
- The superscript, written later, attributes the Life to an abbot of the monastery of Beth Aphthonia named John.
- Stylistically the work itself is uniform, indicating single authorship.
- This Life is the only ancient work which covers Severos' life from birth to death.
- The original, now lost, was composed in Greek some time between 538 and 543.
- Some time later, according to the final caption (also written later), the Life was translated into Syriac by the abbot Sergios bar Karya.⁶²

Moses bar Kepha (813–903)⁶³ and some modern scholars (Wright, and for a while Duval) understood this John to be John bar Aphthonia (d. 537), the founder of the monastery at Qenneshre.⁶⁴ Nau and Baumstark opined that John Psaltes (d. 600), who was active as a writer and abbot at Beth Aphthonia towards the end of the sixth century, was the author.⁶⁵ Peisker, on the other hand, believes that neither of these was the author, but rather an unknown monk at the monastery of Beth Aphthonia. Such are the options, but which is most probable?

62 Sergios bar Karya appears to have been elevated to the episcopacy of Harran. See Baumstark 1922, 185; Nau 1902, 107–08.

63 Moses bar Kepha was a non-Chalcedonian bishop of Beth-Ramman, Beth-Kionaya, and Mosul on the Tigris and a celebrated ecclesiastical writer.

64 See Wright 2001 [1894], 84–85. Duval changed his mind between the second and third editions of his *La littérature syriaque*. In the second edition he ascribed it to John bar Aphthonia, in the third edition to John, abbot of Beth Aphthonia, whom he clearly distinguishes from the monastery's founder. See Duval 1900, 361 and Duval 1907, 152, 359. Concerning the opinion of Moses bar Kepha, see Baumstark 1922, 185, especially note 4. Although modern scholarship is not unanimous in identifying the monastery of Qenneshre with that of Beth Aphthonia, it does seem likely.

65 Nau 1902, 106–08; Baumstark 1922, 184–85.

John bar Aphthonia was competent in Greek, but could not have written this *Life* for two reasons: a) his death is narrated in paragraph 77, and b) the *Life* is too unified stylistically to have been the work of more than one hand. So he could not have written the bulk of the work, only to be overtaken by death and the text finished by another. This option then seems impossible.

That John Psaltes was the author, although not impossible, is problematic. He too was competent in Greek and he was active as a writer as well as being abbot of the monastery of Beth Aphthonia, but only in the later sixth century. However, Severos died on 8 February 538, and Dometios of Beth Aphthonia, who had commissioned this *Life*, was made bishop of Laodicea by Jacob Baradaeus in 543. Hence there is a rather narrow window of time in which this work could have been written, that is, between 538 and 543. The hagiographic style of the work itself also favours an earlier date of composition, and this will be discussed further when addressing its literary genre. The abbot who succeeded John bar Aphthonia, who died in 537, was called Alexander. Hence, unless Alexander died relatively soon after assuming his new office, a fact not known, there would have little opportunity for John Psaltes to have written this work as abbot. Furthermore, John Psaltes would have been very young for an abbot when he composed the *Life*. He would necessarily also have had to have lived to a very old age.⁶⁶ Although longevity among ascetics is hardly unknown, the difficulties of timing combined with the guesswork concerning the demise of Alexander makes his authorship questionable. The main advantage of this proposition is that he at least was named John, he was an abbot at Beth Aphthonia and was active as a writer in the sixth century, albeit the late sixth century.⁶⁷

This leaves the third option, that of Peisker, namely that the author was an unknown monk at the monastery of Beth Aphthonia.⁶⁸ It is the least ambitious of the three propositions, but it has certain advantages, one of which is that the *Life* was written anonymously, the attribution to John coming only later in the superscript. The time frame of 538–43 gives no difficulty here. A fellow monk at the same monastery could certainly have been on sufficiently intimate terms with Dometios to have responded to the request mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2. Given how little we really know about the author of this *Life* of Severos, and the restrictive time frame involved, the hypothesis that the author was an unknown monk at Beth Aphthonia is the most plausible.

66 Paragraph 27, the only autobiographical reference in this work, shows the author visiting the monastery of Peter the Iberian as early as 511. See Peisker 1903, 24–25.

67 Nau 1902, 106–08; Peisker 1903, 3–7.

68 Peisker 1903, 3–7.

The Life of Severos, its content and literary genre

The text was composed originally in Greek between 538 and 543 and some time later was translated into Syriac by the abbot Sergios bar Karya, who apparently became bishop of Harran. It is this Syriac translation which has been passed down, the original Greek version having been lost. It is a rather standard hagiographical work with some digressions. Being written soon after Severos' death, relatively restrained in narrating miraculous events, and still rich in verifiable historical content, this *vita* or saint's life falls into what Delehayé categorizes as an account of an eyewitness or a contemporary informed with the reports and memories of other eyewitnesses.⁶⁹ Knowing so little about the author, we cannot say for certain whether he knew Severos of Antioch personally. But he is well informed about Severos' life and must have known the reports of Severos' contemporaries. He did know John the Canopite and other acquaintances of Severos as well.⁷⁰ He certainly knew many of Severos' literary works well enough to cite them in the Life.⁷¹

A standard hagiographical work is a literary work intended to lionize a given saint that follows certain formulae, highlighting in the boldest strokes the sanctity and spiritual prowess of the subject. Such works may contain much verifiable historical information, especially if not too far removed from the original context of the saint. Yet historical accuracy is not the focus, but rather the holiness of the saint as conceived by the hagiographer and his intended audience. Typically, the greater the distance in time between the subject matter and hagiographer, the smaller becomes the historical element and the greater the fantastic and miraculous. In content, hagiographies fall into a fairly standard format. For the saint who was not a martyr, the format resembles the following:

- *Before birth*: the saint's nationality and parentage, his future greatness miraculously foretold
- *His lifetime*: his childhood and youth, his precocity, further indications of future greatness, his spiritual career, most significant acts, virtues and miracles
- *His death and afterwards*: death and vindication, his cult and miracles⁷²

⁶⁹ Delehayé 1998, 89–93.

⁷⁰ See paragraph 27.

⁷¹ As, for example, in paragraphs 40, 44, 57, 64, 65, 66, 68, 70, and 76.

⁷² Delehayé 1998, 72–73; Aigrain 1953, 156–59.

Under these guidelines, a monk, for example, would excel in zeal, asceticism, spiritual acuity, and prayer. A sainted bishop would never willingly accept the episcopacy but would be zealous in fulfilling the obligations of his office once assumed. How does this Life of Severos fit this pattern, considering that Severos was both monk and bishop? An outline of its content should illustrate this.

Superscript (inserted later)

1–6 Foreword to Dometios

7–8 Pre-birth information, his noble lineage, both spiritual and physical

9–79 His lifetime

9–15 His precocious youth, both spiritually and intellectually, including prophecies of future greatness

16–18 Severos' conversion, baptism and embrace of monasticism

19–22 A mini-Life of Peter the Iberian, with a prophecy of Severos' future greatness

23–25 Severos' early monasticism at the monastery of Peter the Iberian along with the recognized fulfilment of Peter's prophecy

26–34 An aside about John the Canopite, Theodore of Ascalon, and John of Antioch

35–39 Severos' monastic career: his youthful ascetic severity, asceticism as martyr-like contest, recovery at the monastery of Romanos, his selling of his goods and purchase and direction of a monastery near Maïuma of Gaza, his spiritual and dogmatic expertise recognized universally

40–47 Severos' dogmatic career and martyr-like contest: general persecution of non-Chalcedonian monks, composition of *Ad Nephaliū*, Severos' first departure for Constantinople during Anastasius' reign, composition of *Philalethes*, utter rout of heretics in the capital city, deposition of Makedonios

48–55 Severos' unwilling elevation to the episcopal throne of Antioch, universal acclaim of the pious, clerics, and laity, a reminder of Menas' prophecy concerning Severos in paragraph **13**

56–67 Severos' episcopal career at Antioch: triumphal entry, sermon against christological heresy, cleansing of the episcopal palace of cooks, baths, and other luxuries, composition of edifying hymns and moral purification of Antioch, efficacious intercessions before God on behalf of Antioch, his own prophecy and admonitions to repentance, sermons and pastoral concern for his flock, bolstering persecuted non-Chalcedonian monks

68–72 Severos in exile: treatise *Against the Impious Grammarian*, the silencing of John the Grammarian, Severos' struggle against Julian of Halicarnassus and apthartodocetism,⁷³ continued pastoral zeal

73–79 Severos summoned to Constantinople under Justinian: winning over Anthimos I, patriarch of Constantinople, his departure and anticipation of death, his prophecies of his own demise and that of John bar Aphthonia

80–82 Severos' victorious death and eternal reward, posthumous miracles

83 Closing address to Dometios

Final caption (inserted later)

As can be seen from this outline, this Life of Severos adheres closely to the format expected from the life of a holy monk or bishop. Severos has noble spiritual and physical forebears. His pagan parentage, certainly known from consulting Zacharias' work, is ignored. His youth is filled with pious and intellectual precocity. Prophecies foretelling Severos' future glories abound throughout the work. His asceticism is severe, severe enough to injure his health – a 'forgivable' youthful offence of zeal not repeated in his mature career. His theological career is a brilliant struggle. In fact, both his monastic and dogmatic activities are frequently portrayed in the context of the martyr's *agon* or contest.⁷⁴ Since hagiographies of holy monks and bishops were modelled on the earlier hagiographies of holy martyrs this is perhaps not so surprising. Yet the author is very deliberate in his use of this theme, which does fit well with the sternness of Severos' monastic career and the combativeness of his dogmatic endeavours. Severos naturally resists the episcopal throne, but afterwards is zealous in the duties of his office. He goes into exile but fights on. He prophesies truthfully, dies gloriously and is embellished with posthumous healings and miracles. The main digressions are the mini-narratives concerning Peter the Iberian, John the Canopite, Theodore of Ascalon, and John of Antioch. Yet even these digressions conspicuously serve the purpose of accentuating the sanctity of Severos, since by having their own spiritual authority firmly established they become more credible as witnesses for Severos' authority.⁷⁵

⁷³ Apthartodocetism was the teaching of Julian of Halicarnassus (d. after 518) and his followers that Christ's body was incorruptible and impassible *before* the Resurrection, although Christ was still able to will his sufferings and death voluntarily. Severos, in contrast, taught that Christ's body was incorruptible and impassible only *after* the Resurrection.

⁷⁴ See paragraphs 21, 22, 35, 40, 41, 46, 66, 74, 75, 76, and 80.

⁷⁵ See paragraphs 13 and 34.

Given the intended genre and corresponding purposes, this *Life* of Severos is a well-conceived and well-executed hagiography of a holy monk and bishop. Being not so far removed from Severos' own lifetime, the work abounds with historical information, although such data was carefully selected and adapted to the demands of the genre. The dramatic struggles of Severos' career were amenable to being recast in such a manner and the author was well acquainted with the details of Severos' life. This *Life* stands in marked contrast with Zacharias' earlier work, which was also well informed and frequently consulted for the narrative of the earlier stages of Severos' life. Whereas the current work is a *vita* or saint's life, Zacharias' work is best understood as an apology or polemic responding to specific accusations arising from Severos' pagan parentage.⁷⁶

Such differences in format and genre could account for the relatively greater popularity enjoyed by this *Life* in the manuscript tradition over that of Zacharias. Once the initial context of Zacharias' polemic receded, the need for it would decline due to fading remembrance of the original controversy. Reading such a work later would only tend to remind the pious of what they might find best forgotten. The current *Life*, in contrast, fulfils the criteria of the hagiographical genre well both in content and format. It would thus have a steady audience in the educated monastic circles in which it was read. Its purpose of pious edification, with Severos as exemplar, would tend not to fade, although memories of Severos' immediate historical context certainly would.

6. THE PRESENT TRANSLATIONS

The translations are based on Kugener's edition of Berlin Sachau 321 (dated 740/1) in *Patrologia Orientalis* 2.1 and 2.3 (1904). For convenience of reference new paragraph numbers (in bold) have been provided for both *Lives*; at the same time Kugener's pagination has also been given (within square brackets). A certain amount of overlap between the Introduction, the annotation to the two *Lives*, and the Glossary has deliberately been allowed for the benefit of those readers who may want to consult only one part of the book at a time.

⁷⁶ Zach. *VSev.* 1–6. Yet even Severos himself did not deny this, although it was soon repressed in Syrian Christian memory. See Garitte, 1966, 338–39, 357–58, 374 (IV:2–6). See also the discussion above concerning Severos' parentage, in section 1 of the Introduction.

TRANSLATIONS

ZACHARIAS, ‘LIFE’ OF SEVEROS¹

A narrative of the way of life of the saintly Severos, patriarch of Antioch, written by Zacharias the *scholastikos* who studied with him in Alexandria, and then in Beirut, studying law.

1. [Zacharias] Where have you come from today, my good friend?²

[Friend] I’ve come to you straight from the Royal Stoa,³ my good sir, desiring to learn the answer to a question I’d like to put to you. I’m disturbed by a pamphlet which purports to be by someone who is a Christian, but whose real intent is to make fun of Christianity.

[Zacharias] Tell me about it, how did you come across the pamphlet? [8]

2. [Friend] I was searching through the books of the booksellers⁴ in the Royal Stoa – you know that I have a passion for this sort of thing; and one of the men sitting there selling books handed me the pamphlet in question, just to read. In it were defamatory words of abuse, calumny and insult against a particular philosopher who has been known to you from the outset. He has (since then) led a distinguished career as a bishop, shining out both by the example of his life and by his teaching in matters of true religion. I’m talking

1 Numbers in bold refer to sections of the present translation; numbers in square brackets [] represent the page numbers in Kugener’s edition (the usual form of reference hitherto), and numbers in braces { } represent the section numbers in Nau’s French translation.

2 Perhaps deliberately reflecting the opening of Plato’s dialogue *Protagoras* (or, though less likely, *Phaidros* or *Menexippos*).

3 Zacharias is writing in Constantinople, probably in the 520s (for the context, see Watts 2005); the Royal Stoa, variously called the *hē basileios stoa* (Agathias), or *hē basileōs stoa* (Procopius, Zosimus), was the portico surrounding the central court of the Basilica (a little to the west of St Sophia); see Mango 1959, 48–49, and Guiland 1969, II, 4–5. It is mentioned again in **71**; it was also the place where the Manichaean pamphlet turned up in 527, which Zacharias was asked to refute (see Introduction).

4 Lit. ‘scribes’; for the presence of booksellers in the Royal Stoa, see Agathias, *Histories* II.29.2. In the light of the term ‘scribes’ here, it is evident that production and sales took place in the same location. For book production in Constantinople in the time of Justinian, see Cavallo 1978, 217–18, 231.

about Severos, whose reputation is high among those who recognise how to adjudicate what is good without being blinded by prejudice. That is why I am not just a little upset.

3. [Zacharias] If you have such a high opinion of the man, my friend, why do you bother with that defamer and calumniator, whoever he may be? From what you say, outwardly and hypocritically he pretends to hold to a Christian position, but his real concern is to promote a pagan one: by concentrating on praising pagans, he uses them as a way of throwing abuse at men whose virtue is well attested and for whom, already for a considerable time now, it has been their lot to serve God in the priesthood with such a fine manifestation of the philosophical life⁵. [9]

4. [Friend] It is not because I have been thrown into any doubt, or that I agree with what has been so maliciously written that I have come to you. But I am upset, as I told you, lest people who read it in a simple-minded way might perhaps pick up the wrong sort of idea about a bishop such as this. So, if you have a concern for the truth – and I know you have – recount his life from his childhood onwards, for the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom are grounded those who combine the priestly office with that of philosophy, as the true philosophy.⁶ You can also add what city he came from, and also from what people and family, if you happen to know this information about the man. But above everything else, tell how he conducted himself, and how he thought about God from his youth up. For this calumniator did not just try to incriminate him over his conduct and way of life, but also on the ground that he had formerly worshipped demons and idols, for the writer said, ‘He was caught in the act of making pagan sacrifices in Phoenicia at the time when he was studying the liberal arts and law.’

5. [Zacharias] We don’t have to make an investigation [10] if someone comes along and slings mud at other people’s lives, having picked up some false tittle-tattle. It would be otherwise if there was a grain of truth in what

5 Christian life was frequently referred to as ‘the philosophical life’ from Eusebius onwards, and the usage is particularly favoured by Zacharias in the present text (see next note).

6 ‘True philosophy’ occurs again in **13** and **110**, but more frequently Zacharias has ‘divine philosophy’ (e.g. **53**, **72**, **117**, **119**). The term ‘true philosophy’, in contrast to Classical Greek philosophy, goes back to Philo (for Judaism) and Clement of Alexandria (for Christianity). By the late fourth century it had sometimes taken on the connotation of the monastic life in the Cappadocian Fathers and John Chrysostom (Malingrey 1961, 272), and this is the sense in which Zacharias uses it; on the usage in early Christian writers, see especially Malingrey 1961, *passim* (p. 288 n. 117 specifically refers to Zacharias’ Life of Severos).

had been said, for this makes it easy for the evil demons and their friends to make accusations against those who have lived a virtuous life. We should not be surprised if Satan designates the servants of Christ, God over all, as 'satans'. For when the Cause of the act of creation of everything came to us, (Satan) led the Jews to blaspheme and say, 'It is by Beelzebub, the head of the demons, that he is driving out the demons'.⁷

6. However, because you said you were afraid lest simple-minded people get harmed by the pamphlet, and out of respect for truth and love for you, I will recount to you his life, seeing that from his early youth I was with him in Alexandria and in Phoenicia, studying under the same teachers and sharing the same lodgings. Those who were studying with us and are still alive – and there are quite a number – will testify to what I say.

7. {2} The renowned Severos was a Pisidian by family, his home city being Sozopolis – that is, after the (heavenly) city from which we have all fallen as a result of [11] Adam's transgression, and to which the divine Apostle summons us once again when he says 'We do not have a lasting city here on earth, but we seek after the one which is to come, whose architect and maker is God.'⁸

8. He was brought up by parents who were notable, according to those who knew them, for being descended from the Severos who had been bishop of the self same city⁹ at the time of the First Council that had been assembled at Ephesus against the wicked Nestorius.¹⁰ After the death of his father – who had been a member of the city's Senate – he was sent by his widowed mother to Alexandria with his two older brothers, to be educated in grammar and rhetoric¹¹ in both languages, that is to say, Greek and Latin.¹²

7 Matt. 12:24.

8 Cf. Heb. 13:14, 11:10.

9 A Severos was indeed bishop of Sozopolis in 431 (ACO I.i.vii, p. 113; Fedalto 1988, I, 263; Destephen 2008, 846–47). Zacharias must have known that Severos had a pagan background, and his alleged descent from a bishop of the same name is carefully attributed to others. For Severos' alleged Christian parentage, see the Introduction, section 1.

10 The Council of Ephesus of 431 is here called the 'First Council' in order to distinguish it from the second Council of Ephesus of 449, disowned at the Council of Chalcedon (451), but recognized by the Miaphysites; for Ephesus II, see Price and Gaddis 2005, I, 30–37.

11 These were the basic elements of the *enkuklios paideia*, for which (in connection with Syriac), see Watt 2010. See also note to 15.

12 For Latin in the Eastern Roman Empire, see especially Rochette 1997; also Av. Cameron 2009.

9. Since it is the custom in his country – so some people say¹³ – for people to approach holy baptism only when grown up, unless there be some pressing need,¹⁴ it so happened that he and his brothers were still catechumens when they came to Alexandria for the purpose just mentioned. This was at exactly the same time that I was staying in Alexandria for the same reason. {3} So these three brothers went first of all (to study) with the sophist John, known as the [12] ‘*Sumgraphos*’,¹⁵ and subsequently with Sopatros¹⁶ who was renowned for his skill in rhetoric, as everyone attested. It so happened that I too went to him at that time, along with Menas,¹⁷ of pious memory, whose orthodoxy, sober life-style, noble sobriety, love for his fellow human beings, and compassion towards the poor, are all universally attested. He was one of those who were assiduous in attendance of the holy church, whom the Alexandrians called ‘*philoponoi*’,¹⁸ according to the local custom.

10. In the course of our time studying there, we were amazed at the innate sharp wit of the admirable Severos and at his application to study: in only a little while he had trained himself to speak eloquently, applying himself assiduously to putting into practice the teachings of the rhetoricians of old, eagerly imitating their fine utterance and effort. His mind was directed towards nothing else apart from study alone: he was not even distracted by things that usually distract the young. In his concern for studying he kept away from every unworthy spectacle.

13 Again Zacharias is careful to attribute to others what he must have known was not, in fact, the case.

14 Similarly Anon., *VSev*, 137/217: ‘he had not received holy baptism, according to a certain custom of his country: according to the norm of practice there, apart from necessity of (impending) death, no one would be baptized until his beard had started to grow’. Adult baptism had earlier been the norm and of course is presupposed by the fourth- and early fifth-century collections of catechetical homilies by Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and others. Infant baptism was only beginning to become common in the late fifth century.

15 Known only from here: see Ioannes 38 in *PLRE* II, 603. Although it is poorly attested, *sēmeiographos* has traditionally been taken to be the term underlying *smgrpws*; *sumgrapheus* (for *suggrapheus*), ‘(prose) writer’, however, is adopted here, as perhaps more likely.

16 *PLRE* II, 1020 (‘Sopater 3’); Szabat 2007, 304–05; possibly he is the same person as the addressee of Aineas of Gaza’s Letter 9.

17 A member of the group of *philoponoi* (see next note); see also 11 (mentioning his poetry), 45, 59–61, 158; he is not otherwise known.

18 ‘Lovers of toil’. For the different names given to groups of ardent Christians, see 27. Besides referring, as here, to such a group of Christians, the term can be used in different contexts as well (thus in the case of the Christian philosopher John Philoponos). See Wypszyccka 1996, 257–78.

11. We were worried at the time that such a sharp intelligence had not yet [13] been held worthy of holy baptism, so we advised Severos to set the Discourses of Basil and Gregory,¹⁹ the renowned bishops, against those of the sophist Libanios²⁰ whom he admired, along with the rhetoricians of old. Through the rhetorical art that he so loved he might in this way arrive at the views and philosophy of these two men. Having once tasted of writings such as these, he was completely won over: very soon he was praising openly Basil's letters to Libanios, and Libanios' reply to them where he acknowledges that he has been vanquished by Basil, according victory to the letters of the latter.²¹ As a result, from that moment on, he submerged himself in the images and thoughts of the famous Basil. My fellow student Menas, who was admired by everyone for his poetry, was led to say – prophetically, as it turned out – that Severos would shine out among bishops just like the holy John²² who had been entrusted with the helm of the holy Church of Constantinople. By means of this pious soul God, who alone foreknows the future, revealed this about Severos while he was still a youth. [14]

12.²³ {4} Not long afterwards, the affair concerning Paralios²⁴ and the grammarian Horapollon²⁵ occurred, from which it will become clear that (Severos), who contrary to the laws of God had been calumniated by that

19 Similarly Anon., *VSev.* 16. Basil of Caesarea (c.330–79) and Gregory of Nazianzus (329/30–389/90) were probably both among Libanios' pupils.

20 After holding teaching posts in Constantinople and Nicomedia, the renowned rhetorician Libanios (314–c.393) returned to his native Antioch in 354, where he held the chair of rhetoric. For recent translations of a selection from his voluminous correspondence, see Bradbury 2004 and Cribiore 2007b, 233–321; and for his Near Eastern context, see Millar 2007.

21 Likewise mentioned by Anon., *VSev.* 16. The correspondence survives: Basil, *Letters* 335–59 (*CPG*) and *Libanii Opera* (ed. R. Foerster, 1922), XI, 572–97. The authenticity of the letters (at least of most of them) has usually been rejected; see *CPG* 2900 for details of those by Basil.

22 John Chrysostom (c.347–407). Menas' prophecy is also found in Anon., *VSev.* 12.

23 For the sections concerning Paralios (12–58), see especially Trombley 1994, II, 4–29, and Watts 2010, 1–21, 65–71; Watts 2010, 263–64, dates the events to spring 486.

24 Destephen 2008, 752–53.

25 Horapollon taught philosophy in Alexandria during the reign of Zeno (474–91), and was the nephew of Heraiskos (see note to 16); the description of him as a 'grammarian' is not found elsewhere. He is thought to be the person mentioned in connection with a petition of 493, in P. Cairo III, 67295, on which see Maspéro 1914. Horapollon is further mentioned in 14, 16, 22, 25–27, 32 and 44; for him, see *PLRE* II, 569–70; Kaster 1988, 295–97; Szabat 2007, 256–57; and *DPhA* III, 806–08. For the role of *grammatikoi*, see Kaster 1988.

abusive defamer, was innocent of every imputation.²⁶ How all this began, I will tell you.

13. This man Paralios was from Aphrodisias, the metropolis of the Carian people.²⁷ He had three brothers, two of whom, however, were under the grip of the error of the pagans and used to appease the demons with invocations, sacrifices, incantations and magic spells. The third brother, however, Athanasios,²⁸ a man of God, opted for the monastic life in Alexandria, in the monastery called the ‘Enaton’,²⁹ along with the renowned Stephanos.³⁰ After his initial education, when he was trained in civil law in Phoenicia, he came on some business to Alexandria. On meeting Stephanos, just mentioned – a man who had been fervently religious ever since his youth, who was then teaching as a sophist, or professor – the two of them decided to abandon the legal profession,³¹ with all its empty hopes. As it were at the prompting of God each of them took on the yoke of the true philosophy, receiving it from the great Shalman,³² who at that time was [15] head of those who cultivated the philosophical life in that monastery, a man sound in soul and outshining in the monastic virtues.

14. Now Paralios, who had been brought up in a pagan way at home by the other two brothers, came to Alexandria wanting to learn the art of grammar. Before leaving he had received from (his brothers) many recommendations not to speak a single word with Athanasios, mentioned above. Therefore he came to the grammarian Horapollon, someone who had a first-rate knowledge of his profession and professed it excellently, but in his religious beliefs he was a pagan, dazzled by the demons and the magic arts.

26 Zacharias’ argument here is that, since the Paralios episode took place ‘not long afterwards’ (i.e. while Zacharias and Severos were still in Alexandria), the fact that Severos was not involved at all in it should indicate to the reader that the calumny was baseless.

27 Modern Geyre; Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity is exceptionally well documented from inscriptions; see Rouché 1989, 1993.

28 Destephen 2008, 179.

29 This monastery, named after the ninth milestone where it was situated (to the SW of Alexandria), played an important role in Miaphysite circles in the sixth and early seventh centuries (it was there that the Syriac translation of the Septuagint, known as the ‘Syrohexapla’, was made, and the Peshitta New Testament was radically revised, producing the ‘Harkleian’ version). See van Cauwenbergh 1914, 64–72; Gascou 1991, III, 954–58; and *GEDSH* 144–45.

30 *PLRE* II, 1029 (‘Stephanus 7’); Szabat 2007, 307; only known from this text.

31 Lit. ‘profession of *dikanikē*’, with a marginal gloss: ‘he calls the profession of the *scholastikos* “*dikanikē*”’.

32 Following Kugener, the name has regularly been represented as Salomon (which would be Shlemon in Syriac); the underlying Greek will have been Salamanes.

As a result, Paralios' pagan belief was reinforced, and his mind was set on making sacrifices to idols, along with his master.

15. Finally, however, he was overcome by his natural desire to see his brother Athanasios after so long. So when he turned up at the monastery of Shalman, he became prey for the holy pair, Stephanos and Athanasios. On receiving from (Paralios) numerous pagan objections and questions, through the power of the divine Spirit they had no difficulty in refuting them, seeing that Stephanos was extremely well educated, being well prepared both in Christian doctrine and in general³³ learning; [16] having come across many writings of the Church Doctors that combated the pagans, he had received a particular grace from God to win over completely pagans in any discussion with them. In his religious zeal he resembled the great Elijah.³⁴

16. In the process of refuting the pagans' sophistic arguments against the Christians, he threw back at Paralios the absurdities of the pagans: the foul rites of their gods, the false oracles of polytheism with their obscure and ambiguous replies, their ignorance of the future, and all the other deceits of these same demons. And he urged (Paralios) to convey doubts such as these to the circle of Horapollon, Heraiskos, Asklepiodotos, Ammonios and Isidoros,³⁵ together with the other philosophers who were with them; then (Paralios) could be an upright judge of the arguments put forward on both sides. So Paralios, having engaged in discussions of this sort over many days, found the arguments of the pagans to be weak and lacking any firm basis.

17.³⁶ {5} Something else happened which deserves recording in writing. Asklepiodotos of Alexandria, who had won admiration for (his) philosophy

33 The underlying Greek will have been *enkuklios*; a marginal gloss explains this as 'secular education'; see also note to 8, above.

34 For Elijah's 'zeal', see 1 Kgs 19:10, 14.

35 Heraiskos, uncle of Horapollon, is mentioned again in 25; on him see *PLRE* II, 543–44; Szabat 2007, 249; and *DPhA* III, 628–30. Asklepiodotos of Alexandria had studied in Athens under Proklos; subsequently he became the son-in-law of Asklepiodotos of Caria (see 17); on him see *PLRE* II, 161–62 ('Asklepiodotos 3'); Szabat 2007, 224–25; and especially *DPhA* I, 626–31. Ammonios, who also studied under Proklos, had a number of famous students, including Damaskios, Olympiodoros, Simplicios, and John Philoponos, as well as Zacharias himself (Zacharias' dialogue, *Ammonios*, survives); on him, see *PLRE* II, 71–72; Kaster 1988, 241; Szabat 2007, 217–18; Poggi 1997; and *DPhA* I, 168–70; and on Isidoros, see *PLRE* II, 628–31 ('Isidoros 3'); *DPhA* III, 870–78; and Szabat 2007, 265–67. The intellectual background is described in Athanassiadi 1999, who also provides a reconstruction of Damaskios' *Philosophical History*.

36 On the episode of Asklepiodotos and the baby, see Frankfurter 2000, 189–91.

from the pagans by reason of his use of incantations, enchantments [17] and invocation of demons, persuaded his namesake to give him his daughter in marriage. This was at the time when his namesake was full of pride at the honours and official posts that he had received from the emperor, and who held the first rank in the Senate of Aphrodisias. Thus Asklepiodotos³⁷ spent a considerable time in Caria with his wife, desirous to become a father of children. His desire, however, was not fulfilled, God having imposed on him deprivation from children and his wife's barrenness as a punishment for his busying himself with the evil practices of magic. Now when his father-in-law was upset at his daughter's lack of children, this philosopher forged an oracle – or rather, in reality, he was deceived by the demon who takes on the likeness of Isis – to the effect that she promised him children if he went with his wife to her temple that had formerly existed in Menuthis,³⁸ a village fourteen miles from Alexandria, close to the place called Kanopos. Thus he urged his father-in-law to allow him to take his wife and go with her to that place, having promised he would return to him with his wife and the son she would bear. Having deceived his namesake, Asklepiodotos went off to Alexandria. [18]

18. He spent some time in Menuthis, and offered up myriads of sacrifices to the demons, but failed to get any further benefit, his wife remaining as she was, barren, even there. Having imagined that he had seen Isis in a dream lying beside him, he learnt from the dream-interpreters who were there ministering to the demon who had taken on the likeness of Isis, that he ought to sleep with the goddess's idol and then afterwards cohabit with his wife. By this means, a son would be born to him. The philosopher³⁹ was persuaded by a deception such as this – just as the priest had advised him at the very beginning, so he promised him at the end – and he cohabited with the stone that had the likeness of Isis, and after this, with his wife. She, however, remained barren, all the same.

37 An honorary inscription mentioning this Asklepiodotos of Caria survives (CIG 2851): see Robert 1948, 115–26, with plate V.2; and Roueché 1989, 87–93. He also features in Damaskios' *Philosophical History* (Athanasiasiad, #86G), where his daughter is named Damiane; see also her Appendix II, 'The two Asclepiodoti', 348–49, making use of the present passage; also 37–38.

38 The events at Menuthis described by Zacharias have received much comment; see especially Herzog 1939; Kákossy 1984, 68; Chuvín 1990, 106–10; Haas 1997, 327–29. In his collection of texts Bernard 1970, 207–13, provides the French translation of the passage in Zacharias. On Menuthis in general, see Timms 1984, I, 438–46 (under 'Buqir').

39 The designation here is clearly ironic.

19. Finally, the priest advised him to go alone with his wife to the village of Asty and live there for a while, and adopt as a son the boy that had been born a little while earlier to the priestess who was related to the priest who had pretended that this was what the gods and the fates wished him to do. He was persuaded by this advice too, and so he went with his wife, without anyone else with them, to the infant's mother. Having offered a specific sum of money, he then took her son. In this way, after a while he turned up in Alexandria, boasting that, after all this time, a barren woman had given birth. As a result, those who are gripped by the craziness of the pagans [19] took enormous pride in this fabrication, as though it was a true fact, and gave praise to Isis and to Menuthis, the village of the goddess where (subsequently) some benefactor buried Isis's temple in the sand so that not even a trace of it could be seen.⁴⁰

20. Supposing this false tale to be true, Paralios informed his brother and those with him about it, as something remarkable: here was a demonstration in the form of actual facts, so he was asserting, stronger than any rational argument, and he was boasting of it as the manifest performance of a pagan miracle. On hearing this imposter's tale, the divine Stephanos said to Paralios, 'If the barren woman has indeed given birth, my good fellow, then she will also be providing milk', and so they⁴¹ would need to be persuaded concerning this by means of some notable and chaste woman of good family from Alexandria who sees the milk coming and will inform them of this miracle. In this way the daughter of the Carian nobleman and wife of the philosopher will not be considered to be dishonoured.

21. This seemed sensible, so Paralios transmitted the monk's proposition to the pagan philosophers. Afraid of being accused of fabrication, they told Paralios, 'You are aiming at the impossible: do you think you can persuade people who unshakingly hold to the truth and have no inclination towards anything of this sort? [20] When it appeared []⁴² confirmed [] of this, they ... because [] when [] be persuaded [] what had been said, so that it should turn out for Paralios that he would escape from the opinions and the [] of the pagans.

40 The temple of Isis at Menuthis was known to Epiphanius, *Against Heresies* III.2.12 = *de Fide* 12.1 (PG 42, 804), and is mentioned in the invocation to Isis in P.Oxyrhynchus 1380, line 63. Its exact location remains unknown.

41 That is, Paralios and his brother and friends. (This is evidently the sense of the Syriac, whose syntax is obscure here.)

42 The (single) manuscript is damaged at this point.

22. {6} There was something else as well, along the following lines. When (Paralios) was in Menuthis, he saw Isis – that is, the demon which took her form – telling him in a dream, ‘Beware of so and so: he is a sorcerer.’ It so happened that this person had come to learn grammar and was studying with the same teacher. [] The demon said the same thing to this man too when he came to Menuthis (to ask) about Paralios. When each of them told their fellow students in Horapollon’s school about these visions and each in turn heard what the other had said about his fellow student, each was sure he was the truthful one and the other a liar. As a result, Paralios called to mind the teaching of the great Stephanos and the many conversations that Stephanos and Athanasios had initiated with him about the perversity of the evil demons, how their habit is to make people mad with one another, taking their pleasure all the time in squabbles and conflicts, seeing that they are the enemies of peace. [21]

23. Paralios wanted to know the truth about these matters, for he was still thinking that his fellow student was a liar – as usually happens with that demon and (its) perversity in those localities. So he went again to Menuthis, offered the usual sacrifices to the demon, supplicating it to provide an oracle to say one of two things: was he the sorcerer, or was his enemy? And, had a similar oracle concerning him really been given? Now the demon was not (going to) tolerate accusations of any contradiction in these oracles, or of any malice involved in them, so it did not accord him any reply at all. As a result Paralios spent many days supplicating the demon not to leave him without any answer, for he did not want to withdraw himself from submission and service to the demon and to the other gods, provided the demon fully informed him about this matter. But when the demon remained in silence and did not produce the usual apparition of its epiphany, Paralios became disillusioned after such a long time and so many sacrifices; from that point onwards he became convinced in himself of the wrong doctrine of the demons. Indeed he was praising the circle of Stephanos as speaking the truth about these matters. He then started praying after the manner they had advised him, ‘O Creator of the universe...’,⁴³ adding the words that the great [22] Stephanos had told him, ‘Reveal to me your truth, and do not allow me to be led astray any longer by this conflict-loving demon who arms people

43 Compare the opening of the prayer at the end of Zacharias’ Dialogue ‘*Ammonios*’ (PG 85, 1141), ‘O Lord and Creator (*dēmiourgos*) of this universe, ...’ (the aim of this work is to show that the universe is not eternal, but created – a focal point at issue in intellectual circles of the time).

against one another, inciting them to quarrels; or by any of the rest of the evil demons who resemble it.'

24. They had advised (Paralios) to pray to the Maker of all, wanting to distance him straight away from the invocation of the pagan gods and demons, I mean Kronos, Zeus, Isis and suchlike names. In this way, little by little he would get used to the true doctrine, and so he would not recognize any other Maker of all apart from our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the Father made the world, the powers, authorities and dominions,⁴⁴ as it is written 'For everything came into being through him', says the Theologian,⁴⁵ 'and apart from him, nothing has come into being.'

25. {25} After praying in this way, Paralios returned to Alexandria, uttering myriad words against the pagan gods, and saying with David, 'All the gods of the nations are demons, but the Lord has made the heavens.'⁴⁶ He was making mock of the things being done by the circle of Horapollon, Asklepiodotos, Heraiskos, Ammonios and the Isidoros who later became known as a sorcerer and mischief-maker, along with the things done by the rest of the pagans at Menuthis, abominable actions of all sorts; (likewise he was mocking) the prostitution of the priestess of Isis, how [23] she made herself available for prostitution to anyone who wanted, not being in any way different from a common prostitute.

26. Horapollon's disciples, who were in the grip of the pagans' madness, could not put up with Paralios' mocking accusations. They fell upon him in the School where they were studying, having waited for a time when there were not many Christians around, and Horapollon himself had left. It was the sixth day of the week, called Friday, when just about all the other professors were in the habit of conducting their classes and lectures, each in his own house.⁴⁷ They beat up Paralios, battering his head and hitting him virtually all over his whole body. Having with difficulty managed to escape from their hands – for he was of a sound physique – he took refuge with the assistance of some Christians as a crowd of pagans were surrounding him and tearing at him.⁴⁸

44 Eph. 1:21.

45 John 1:3.

46 Ps. 96(95):5.

47 'House' here does not necessarily imply their own homes, and perhaps 'room', or the like, is intended. For the lecture rooms recently excavated in Alexandria at Kom el-Dikka, see Watts 2006; McKenzie 2007a, 209–18; and Criboire 2007c.

48 For this episode, see Watts 2010, 65–71.

27. We happened to be nearby at the time because of a philosophy class, for those philosophers, including Horapollon, used normally to teach on Fridays in the School. So three of us approached, I, Thomas [24] the sophist⁴⁹ who loved Christ in everything – like me, he was from the city of Gaza – and Zenodotos of Lesbos. (The three of) us were regularly to be found in the holy churches along with those known as *philoponoi*, who in other places are called ‘the diligent’,⁵⁰ and elsewhere ‘the adherents’,⁵¹ people who to some extent are held in awe by the pagans. We approached those who were making the disturbance, who were many, and we testified to them that what they were doing was not right, causing suffering to a man who wished to become a Christian – for this is what Paralios was crying out. Wanting to mislead us and calm us down with their assurances, they were telling us, ‘We have not got any grievance with you (Christians); we are just getting our own back on this man who is an enemy of ours.’

28. We only just managed, in the commotion, to rescue Paralios from their hands that were intent on murder. Straightaway we took him to the Enaton, to the monks, and showed them his scars, borne for the sake of the true religion, and all that he had had to endure, quite against the law, for having found fault with the error of the pagans; and how he had offered up to Christ, as fair first-fruits, the sufferings for his sake.

29. {8} Then the great Shalman, who was the Superior of the excellent Stephanos [25] and Athanasios, took some other monks and went in to Alexandria, to inform Petros, who at that time was the chief bishop,⁵² of what had occurred. Petros, who was a very capable man, and fervent in the cause of religion, had aroused many of the city’s leading men against the pagans. Among these was the sophist Aphthonios,⁵³ who was a Christian and had numerous students. He told the young men who were being taught by him to go along with us and help us. We then all decided to go along all together and inform the bishop Petros about those pagans who had been intent on murder. He gave us his archdeacon and head *notarios*

49 *PLRE* II, 1113 (‘Thomas 4’); only known from this text.

50 The underlying Greek was perhaps *spoudaioi*, another term for the *philoponoi*; see Wypszczycka 1996, 257–78.

51 Perhaps *akolouthoi*.

52 Petros/Peter III Mongos, briefly bishop (anti-Chalcedonian) from 31 July to 4 September 477, and then (as a supporter of the *Henotikon*) again from December 482 to 29 October 489. On him, see especially Ps.Zacharias *HE* V; Frend 1972, 174–81; *CCT* II.4, 38–40; Haas 1993 and 1997, 320–30; and for his role in this text, Watts 2010, 234–50.

53 Only known from this text; *PLRE* II, 110; Szabat 2007, 222.

– who is termed *primicerius* in Latin⁵⁴ – and sent us to Entrechios,⁵⁵ the Prefect (*huparchos*) in Egypt at that time. He was a secret sympathizer of the pagans, and his assessor (or) *sumponos* was openly in the grip of pagan demon-worship. The latter treated us in an insulting way and ordered most of the young men to be ejected, leaving only a few people to tell him about the affair. When Aphthonios' pupils had left, there were only five of us who remained, Paralios who had become a confessor even before his baptism, the renowned Menas whom I mentioned above, Zenodotos from Lesbos [26], or Mytilene, Demetrios from the Solymoi,⁵⁶ all four of whom were enthusiastic champions of God's true religion; while I myself was attached to them as the fifth person.

30. When the Prefect learnt of the seriousness of the affair he gave the order that whichever of the (four) liked, should put down in writing what he wanted. Paralios set down in writing the accusation that certain people (had made) pagan sacrifices, and that they had fallen upon him like bandits.

31. Once the prefect had given orders for the accused to come along, some of the clergy, and the group known as *philoponoï*, had learnt of the insult done to those who had been so zealous in a good cause, as well as of the pagan sacrifices that had audaciously been carried out, they immediately rose up against the authorities and made a headlong dash for the prefect's assessor, shouting out, 'It is not right for someone who belongs to the pagan religion to be an assessor of a person in high office, and to take part in governmental business: in this way the laws and edicts of the ruling emperors are rendered ineffective.' The Prefect only rescued the man with difficulty when he was being asked for by them.⁵⁷ As for us, he told us to remain behind.

32. From that point on the entire populace became incited against the pagans, for those against whom the accusation had been made had escaped, the first [27] to do so being Horapollon who had been the ultimate cause of them all being held. They managed to do this because the Prefect, out of his concern for them, had cast a blind eye.

33. When the great Stephanos learnt of this, he called us to him, to the Enaton, the monastery of Shalman, and he was asking Paralios whether he would be able to point out the pagan idols that were concealed in Menuthis.

⁵⁴ The full term is *primicerius notariorum*.

⁵⁵ Only known from this text; *PLRE* II, 394 ('Entrechios 2').

⁵⁶ Another term for the Isaurians; see the note to **148**. Neither man is otherwise known.

⁵⁷ I.e. the assessor was being 'asked for' by *philoponoï* as someone unsuitable for the office.

(Paralios) said that he would show them, hand over the altar and establish that sacrifices had audaciously been performed. We decided, along with the praiseworthy Shalman, to go along again and inform the bishop Petros of these matters. This we did, and in his presence Paralios promised to show the idols, along with the altar and the sacrifices, and to produce the priest of the idolatrous falsehood.

34. Petros the archbishop provided us with some of his clergy, and gave instructions in a letter to those monks living in the monastery known as ‘of the Tabenessiotes’,⁵⁸ which is situated in Kanopos, to assist us in rooting out and getting rid of the gods of the demons belonging to the pagans.

35. After having prayed for an appropriate outcome, on arrival at Menuthis⁵⁹ we came to a building which was at the time inscribed with pagan characters [sc. hieroglyphs]. In one of the recesses a double wall had been built, inside which the idols had been concealed. A [28] single narrow means of access to them had been made, resembling a window. Through this the priest used to enter and perform the sacrifices. Wanting our careful investigation to prove unsuccessful, the pagans, together with the priestess who lived in that same house, had blocked up the entrance with stones and mortar, for they had learnt of the disturbance that had taken place in the city. In order that the recent character of the building work should not be noticed, and so give away their cunning ruse, they placed a vessel⁶⁰ in front of the location, filled with incense and sacrificial cakes⁶¹; and above it they had suspended a lit candle – even though it was mid-day! As a result Paralios was a little perplexed and troubled, wondering what had happened to the entrance disguised as a window. It was only with difficulty that he recognized the artifice. Having crossed himself with the sign of Christ’s cross, he took down the candle, moved away the vessel, and revealed the entrance that had been blocked up for the occasion with stones and recent masonry. He then asked the Tabenessiotes, who had come along with us to help us, for a pickaxe. In this way he made ready for one of them to open up the part that had recently been built and thus to uncover its former appearance. The Tabenessiote then

58 That is, Pachomian monks, so named after Tabenessi, the site of Pachomius’ monastery.

59 The historicity of the following account has been doubted by some, notably Cameron 2007 (see also Gasco 2007, cited in note to **40**); in defence of the veracity of Zacharias’ account, see Watts 2010.

60 *sqwryn*, representing *skeuarion*; Kugener translates ‘un meuble’, which does not seem possible.

61 *pwpn*, which I have taken as representing *popana*.

entered. On seeing a multitude of idols, and catching sight of an altar [29] covered with blood, he cried out in Coptic, 'There is but one God', uttering this as if to chase away the error of this polytheism.

36. First he handed out the idol of Kronos which was entirely spattered with blood, and then likewise with all the other idols of the demons, a mixed bunch of all sorts of things, even dogs, cats, monkeys, crocodiles and reptiles; for these too were formerly worshipped by the Egyptians. There was also one of the rebel monster, carved in wood. As it seems to me, those who worship it, or rather the monster who wishes to be honoured in this way, are hinting at the rebellion of the protoplasts⁶² which took place by the monster's counsel, by means of the Tree (of Knowledge).⁶³

37. It is said that these idols had surreptitiously been removed from the Temple of Isis that formerly existed in Memphis by the priest of the time, when the pagans felt that their cause was losing its strength and paganism was dying out; accordingly they hid them in the manner just described, in the vain and empty expectation and hope that they would not be caught.

38. Some of the idols had already deteriorated in parts, because of their great age: these we consigned to the flames, there in Menuthis. Now the pagans who [30] lived in this village imagined, under the demonic influence that gripped them, that it was not possible for anyone to get away with touching the (idols) with malicious intent without perishing on the spot. We therefore wanted to demonstrate by actual deeds that the power of the pagan gods and demons was entirely at an end, having been rendered ineffective once Christ, the Word of God, had come and become inhominate,⁶⁴ willingly enduring the cross on our behalf, in order to obliterate all the power of the Adversary. For he has said 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, and I have given you authority to tread underfoot serpent and scorpions, and all the power of the Enemy.'⁶⁵

⁶² I.e. Adam and Eve.

⁶³ Gen. 2–3.

⁶⁴ In several creedal formulae, including the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the combination *sarkōthenta* and *enanthrōpēsanta*, 'made flesh (incarnate)' and 'human (inhominate)', is found. Whereas earlier Syriac translation provided dynamic equivalents such as *lbesh pagra*, 'he put on the body', or *etgashsham*, 'he was embodied', sixth-century translations (such as this) provide calques based on the Greek, *etbassar*, 'he was enfleshed', and *etbarnash*, 'he became inhominate'.

⁶⁵ Luke 10:18–19.

39. Accordingly, wanting to put this into effect, we consigned some of them to the fire, while others we made a list of: these were ones of bronze, elaborately worked, or of marble, in various likenesses, along with the bronze altar and the wooden monster. We sent the list to the city, to Petros, our Lord Jesus Christ's bishop, asking him to instruct us what to do.

40. Those who passed as Christians in Menuthis, including the clergy of the local church – with the single exception of their priest – were extremely weak [31] in the faith,⁶⁶ having been enslaved by the gold that the pagans gave them in order that the villagers would not prevent them from making pagan sacrifices.

41. When evening arrived of the day that we did all this, they needed to guard the idols once they had been listed, so that they would not be surreptitiously removed by someone. However, they said that they were afraid to do so, lest they incur harm from some demonic agency, while guarding them, (claiming) that it was up to us to guard them. On their part, the pagans in Menuthis were thinking – and at the time (were openly) saying that we would certainly die that night. The priest of the church was a firm believer, whose monastic virtues shone out in his old age, and he was direct in his manner. On seeing that the people were afraid, he took us after supper to one of the chambers in the church where these idols had been put, and told us, 'I despise these idols so much that I will tread on them with my feet and insult them in every way, considering them as nothing at all.'⁶⁷ After he had prayed over us, he bade us guard them the entire night, saying that he must see to the Divine Office as usual.

42. So we spent the whole night guarding them. As we did so we were singing [32] 'Let all those who worship carved (deities) be put to shame, all those who boast in their idols',⁶⁸ and 'The gods of the nations are demons, but the Lord has made the heavens',⁶⁹ and 'The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands: they have a mouth but they do not speak'⁷⁰ – and the following verses, along with similar passages.

66 Unless 'weak in faith' refers to Chalcedonians, the silence of Zacharias about the nearby Chalcedonian shrine of St Cyrus and John, said to have been established by Cyril of Alexandria (412–44) is most surprising (for this shrine, see Montserrat 1998); Gascou 2007, however, has shown that it is likely that the date at which it was established was really considerably later, and after the time of the present events (whose historicity, however, Gascou questions, 278–80).

67 Cf. 1 Cor. 10:19–20.

68 Ps. 97(96):7.

69 Ps. 96(95):5.

70 Ps. 115:4–5 (113:12–13).

43. When we got up in the morning we found that the pagans were astonished to find that we were still alive, to such an extent were they in the grip of demon-worship and error. We then dashed off, together with the Tabennesiote monks, and, following the archbishop's instructions, we completely demolished the house where the idols had been found and the sacrifices had taken place.

44. Sunday arrived, the day on which our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the tomb, having undone the power of death, and at the time of the Liturgy all the populace of Alexandria were crying out with tens of thousands of imprecations against the pagans and against Horapollon, to the effect that he should be called Psychapollon, that is, 'Destroyer of souls',⁷¹ instead of Horapollon.

45. The admirable Hesychios was my informant concerning this. He had [33] previously been head of the *philoponoi*, but was now a priest, and he had aroused the people's zeal, with the help of Menas whom we mentioned earlier; for it had seemed a good idea to us that he should stay in the city. In his sermon the bishop openly referred to the list of idols that we had sent, itemizing the material and number of the idols that had been found. Following this, the people made a mad rush for all the carved statues of pagan gods that were in the baths or other buildings; having brought them along, they piled them up and burnt them.

46. Not long afterwards we too returned to the city, bringing with us, along with the idols, their priest, since we had been able to lay hands on him as well, with God's help. We had twenty camel-loads of assorted idols, besides the ones that had been burnt in Menuthis, as we mentioned earlier. We got ready to bring them right into the city, this being what the great Petros had instructed us to do. He then straightaway summoned to him, in front of the Tychaion,⁷² the Prefect of Egypt, the commanding officers of the troops, and all those in whom authority was vested, together with the Senate, nobles, and property owners of the city. Once [34] he had taken his seat with them, he produced the pagan priest. Telling the man to stand in a prominent position, he started to interrogate him about this demonic worship of (lit.

71 Playing on the similarity between the name *Apollon* and the verb *apollumi*, 'destroy'.

72 In the centre of the city. This was a former temple, said to have been converted into a tavern (by the archbishop Theophilos in the 390s), according to an epigram by Palladas (*Palatine Anthology* IX.183), though this has been questioned by McKenzie 2007b, 66–67 with n. 71; see also Watts 2010, 239–40 (with further references).

and) these lifeless objects. He ordered him to give the name of each of them, and the reason for the shape of each. By this time all the populace had rushed to see the spectacle. On hearing all this, and about the sordid affairs of the pagan gods that the pagan priest was relating, they started to jeer. When it came to the bronze altar and the wooden serpent, the priest admitted to the sacrifices that had audaciously been made, stating that the serpent was the same as the one that had led Eve astray,⁷³ according to the tradition handed down to him by earlier priests; and he acknowledged that it was this that the pagans worshipped. The serpent was consequently consigned to the flames, along with the idols.

47. At this point one could just about hear the people shout out ‘Here goes Dionysos the hermaphrodite god! Here goes Kronos who loathes his children! This one is Zeus the adulterer and pederast! Now it’s the battle-loving virgin Athena! Here’s Artemis the huntress who hates strangers! Here goes Ares the war-mongering demon! Here’s Apollo, destroyer of multitudes! Now it’s [35] Aphrodite, patron of prostitutes!’ There was also among them the guardian deity of theft,⁷⁴ while Dionysos was the patron of drunkenness. Among these there was also that rebel serpent, together with dogs and monkeys, and all kinds of cats too, seeing that these were the Egyptian gods. They were jeering at these idols too, and any that had hands or feet they broke. In their happy excitement they were shouting out in the local speech ‘Their gods don’t have a surgeon⁷⁵. Here’s Isis going off to bathe!’ Thousands of other such slogans were they shouting out against the pagans, at the same time praising Zenon⁷⁶ who (later) made a pious end but at that time was holding the reins of power, together with Petros the archbishop and the city nobles who were seated with him.

48. In this way they all departed, praising God for an occasion for the extirpation of demonic error and idol-worship such as this. The priest of the

⁷³ Gen. 3:1–6.

⁷⁴ I.e. Hermes.

⁷⁵ ‘Local speech’ might suggest Coptic, but in fact the word is Greek: the identification of the word as representing Greek *kērōmatitēs* goes back to Schwartz 1912, 27, in connection with its use in Cyril of Skythopolis’ *Life of St Sabbas*, 45. The term can evidently also designate a ‘masseur’, who rubs his patient with a wax-based salve (*kērōma*). A marginal gloss here reads ‘Because they do not have any joints in the hands or feet, so that those who teach *q’rwm*’ can make them circulate; for *q’rwmtytyn* is a person who teaches *qrwm*’. For a discussion of the term (which is also found in an inscription in Aphrodisias), see especially Robert 1965, 167–70; also Roueché 1989, 213–14.

⁷⁶ The emperor, 474–91.

disgraceful pagan religion was kept in custody for the purposes of a more detailed investigation.

49. {9} After all this had taken place, the great Stephanos and those with him remembered the trumped-up story about the barren woman with the alleged child, and the arch-liar Asklepiodotos. [36] Being afraid he might lead people astray in Asia with this fabricated story, the great Shalman secretly urged the archbishop to have a document (*praxis*) of depositions (*hypomnēmata*) made by the *ekdikos*⁷⁷ of the city, requiring that the pagan priest be investigated over the matter of the infant. When this took place, he confessed to everything that we related above, for it was from him that we first came to know of all this. Once this fabrication had been made known to everyone, as a result of another request by Stephanos, seeing that he was a prominent figure at that time, the great Petros made use of a synodical letter addressed to Nonnos, bishop of Aphrodisias,⁷⁸ informing him of these deeds done by the pagans which the priest had been asked to put down in writing concerning the alleged child. The letter also urged him to disclose to everyone the fabrication that had been perpetrated.

50. This synodical letter, however, was never delivered, for the person who had been instructed to convey it, on arrival in Caria had been corrupted by a bribe, as we subsequently learnt. As a result, for a while the pagans in Aphrodisias imagined that this fabrication was the real truth. This lasted until the judge Adrastos,⁷⁹ a Christ-loving man who was a *scholastikos* in that region, was moved to take action about the matter. He managed to get a copy of the *praxis* [37] concerning the fabrication from the Prefect of Egypt at that time, and to bring it from Alexandria to Caria.

51. {10} To return to Paralios: now that he had made an offering to God by this whole affair, when the Feast of Easter arrived, he received saving baptism along with many pagans who, until their old age, had been led astray over a long period in the worship of evil demons. Among the many others baptized with Paralios were the admirable Urbanus⁸⁰ who is now

⁷⁷ I.e. public prosecutor (also mentioned in **91**).

⁷⁸ Destephen 2008, 725–26 ('Nonnos 2'). He is otherwise unknown (and is not mentioned in Fedalto 1988). Peter Mongos' Synodical Letter to him does not survive.

⁷⁹ A typically Carian name: see Roueché 1993, 192.

⁸⁰ *PLRE* II, 1188 ('Urbanus 2'); Kaster 1988, 374; Szabat 2007, 322; perhaps he is the same person as the *grammatikos* of this name to whom Severos' Letter 44 (of the *Collection of Letters*) is addressed (thus Kaster 1988, 374).

Grammatikos of the Latin language and culture in the imperial city,⁸¹ and Isidoros of Lesbos, the brother of the Zenodotos whom I mentioned earlier. He was only baptized after having burnt the invocations of the pagan gods – that is demons – which he possessed: before divine baptism these had been tormenting him, terrifying him in the night-time, following the burning of the idols, and he had sent someone to bring me to his house. He asked me what to do. I came along, having with me a Christian book, since I wanted to read to him the hortatory discourse on saving baptism by Gregory the Theologian.⁸² [38] On arrival I found him in a sweat and very downcast after battling with the demons: he could only just breathe, he said, (once) he had been helped by Christian conversation. Accordingly I asked him if he had any invocations of pagan gods with him. He recalled that he did indeed have with him some sheets with this sort of thing. I then told him sternly, ‘If you want to escape from demonic oppression, consign these sheets to the flames.’ He did this in my presence, and from that moment on he was delivered from this oppression. Afterwards I read to him from the hortatory discourse of the divine Gregory the following passage:⁸³

52. ‘If you are living in the midst of public life and feel yourself sullied by its goings on, and you find it difficult not to lose all sense of compassion, then the answer is simple: if possible, flee from public places and high society. Provide yourself with the wings of an eagle – or, to be more appropriate, of a dove. What have you to do with Caesar and Caesar’s affairs?’⁸⁴ Fly off till you find rest in the place where there is no sin or dark dealing, no snake that bites along the road, preventing you from walking with God. Snatch yourself from the world, flee from Sodom,⁸⁵ flee from its conflagration; set off without looking back, lest you become fixed to the spot as a block of salt; escape to the mountain, lest you are altogether whisked away.’

81 For Latin in Constantinople in the sixth century, see Av. Cameron 2009; a list of Latin teachers there is given by Kaster 1988, 465.

82 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Discourse XL* (PG 36, 359–427; ed. C. Moreschini, SC 358; 1990). For Gregory as ‘the Theologian’ par excellence, see already Philostorgius, *HE* 8.11 (PG 65, 564c).

83 Discourse XL.19, on baptism; PG 36, 383–84. The translator has used the Syriac version of Gregory’s Discourses: this comes down in three forms, the original translation (late fifth/early sixth cent.); a light revision; and a much more thorough revision by Paul, Miaphysite bishop of Edessa, made in Cyprus, c.624. It so happens that all three versions are very similar here, but to judge by the few diagnostic variations, the translator used the light revision, or ‘versio media’ in the edition by Haelewijk, 70–73. Anon., *VSev.* 16, quotes the same passage, but the Syriac translation is different and so independent.

84 Cf. Matt. 22:21.

85 Cf. Gen. 19:12–13.

53. As this was being read out, Paralios [39] exclaimed, 'Let us therefore take wing and fly off to the divine life of philosophy as well as saving baptism.' It was with this hope that he came to divine baptism and was initiated in the divine Mysteries. On the eighth day after his baptism, on which he was to remove his baptismal garments, he took away my brother Stephanos who was studying literature and learning the art of medicine, doing this by night without my being aware since, to tell the truth, he found me too weak-minded to take pleasure in the monastic way of life. So he ran off with him and went to the Enaton, the monastery of the great Shalman and the circle of the renowned Stephanos. After begging his brother Athanasios a great deal, he and my brother together received the monastic habit, thus opting for the divine philosophy.

54. {11} Paralios then showed his concern for his other brothers in Aphrodisias, who were pagans. One of them, named Democharios, was a *scholastikos* in the region,⁸⁶ while the other, whose name was Proklos,⁸⁷ was the sophist of that city. He wrote a letter exhorting them, in which he described all that had happened. He urged them to consider at once the path of repentance and gladly opt for the worship of the one true God, I mean the holy consubstantial Trinity. In this way they would learn [40] in actual fact what the power of Christianity really is. He reminded them of accounts of the rebellion of Illos and Pamprepios:⁸⁸ 'Remember', he said, 'how many sacrifices we offered to the gods when we were all pagans in Caria, dissecting livers and examining them by means of magic arts when we were putting questions to the alleged gods in order to learn whether all of us would defeat the emperor Zenon, who since then made pious end;⁸⁹ (all of) us, Leontios,⁹⁰ Illos, Pamprepios and those who joined the revolt with them; and how many thousands of oracles and promises we received, whose combined force the emperor could not possibly survive, but the time had come when the cause

⁸⁶ Known only from here; *PLRE* II, 352–53.

⁸⁷ Known only from here; *PLRE* II, 919 ('Proclus 5'); Szabat 2007, 296–97.

⁸⁸ 484–88; likewise mentioned in Zacharias, *Life of Isaias*, 10. For the rebellion, see Stein 1949, II, 28–31; for the *magister militum* Illus, see *PLRE* II, 586–90; and for the Egyptian *grammatikos* Pamprepios, see *PLRE* II, 825–28; Kaster 1988, 329–32; and Szabat 2007, 285–86. Pamprepios' horoscope survives, on which see Delatte and Stroobant 1923; on him see also Asmus 1913 and Grégoire 1929. In Ps.Zacharias *HE* V.6 (Greatrex 2011, 193, with n. 104) he is mistakenly called Euprepios.

⁸⁹ For this phrase, which represents Greek *ho tēs eusebous lēxeōs*, see Lampe, s.v. *lēxis* A.5, and Kugener 1900.

⁹⁰ He was proclaimed Augustus by Illus. In Ps.Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle* 14, he is described as a *stratēlatēs*. On him, see *PLRE* II, 670–71 ('Leontius 17').

of Christianity would collapse and pass away, while pagan worship would take hold again. The outcome, however, showed that these oracles were false, just like the oracles that were given by Apollo to Kroisos of Lydia and Pyrrhos of Epiros.⁹¹ You know, too, how subsequently we were sacrificing in locations outside the city, but did not receive a single indication, apparition or response, even though previously we had been accustomed to be aware of some such illusion. [41] In our perplexity we were enquiring and wondering what this might mean. We changed the locations of the sacrifices, but even so the alleged gods remained mute and everything to do with them proved ineffective. We imagined they must be angry with us. Eventually the thought came to us that maybe the will of someone from those attending us was opposed to the rites we were performing. We made enquiries among each other, to ensure we were all fellow initiates, and we discovered that a young boy had made the sign of the cross in the name of Christ, and this had rendered ineffective what we had been so careful to achieve, and so the sacrifices had come to nothing because the alleged gods on all these many occasions had fled away from the name (of Christ) and the symbol of the cross. We were thrown into doubt what this might mean, and the matter was investigated by Asklepiodotos and his circle, and by the rest of the sacrificers and practitioners of magic. One of them thought he had worked out the solution to the problem: the cross is the sign or indication of someone who has died a violent death, and so it was quite right for the gods to show abhorrence for such shapes.'

55. After reminding his brothers of all this in his letter, Paralios, servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, [42] added the following: 'If this is true, brothers, and the gods flee from those who have died a violent death, just at the very mention or indication of them, why is it that, in the rites of Helios, the alleged gods will not come upon the initiates unless the priest first produces a sword covered with the blood of someone who has died a violent death. Lovers of truth should be able to recognize from this that the sign of Christ's cross, which the young boy made on his forehead, demonstrated the alleged gods to be nothing (at all). Likewise, the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ, being an invocation of God and thus fearsome to the evil demons,

⁹¹ Although the claim that pagan oracles were false was frequently made by Christian writers, the circles that produced the collection of pagan prophecies of Christianity known as the *Theosophia* (which has recently, but implausibly, been ascribed to Severos) included several alleged oracles, including one part of which is actually attested in an inscription from Oinoanda, on the border between Lycia and Phrygia; the oracle also features in a Syriac collection produced in Harran, c.600 (see Brock 1983, with further references).

manifested the victory of him <from whom they> fled.⁹² Violent killings of other people, too, are a prime concern of the pagan gods, in that they are evil demons, imitating their father the Devil, of whom our Saviour said, "From the beginning of creation he is a murderer".⁹³ This is why they do not effect their revelations until they see someone violently killed through their harmful action, and this person brings about their indications. For this reason they have commanded that human beings should be sacrificed to them, as their own authors have described, including Porphyry who raved against the truth.⁹⁴ [43]

56. { 12 } With warning episodes such as these Paralios endeavoured to turn his brothers away from error. He had as an instructor in this the great Stephanos, and his own brother Athanasios.

57. So gladly did he take to the divine philosophy (of the monastic life) that many of the young men who were studying with him followed his example, opting for the monastic life in the monastery of the admirable Stephanos. All these he had managed to catch in the nets of the apostolic teaching. One of those who enjoyed his companionship was John. All of these are now leading figures in the monastery whose excellence is equal to that of their predecessors. One of them had been adjutant (*boethos*)⁹⁵ of the entourage (*taxis*) of the Prefect of Egypt;⁹⁶ another had had an excellent education in the art of medicine and in profane philosophy, but had preferred the true philosophy. It was to such men as these that the great Stephanos became the teacher.

58. After a certain while Stephanos, our common teacher, departed to God, and Paralios then went off to Caria with the renowned Athanasios to convert his brothers. He established a community of Christians, conferring its leadership to his brother and spiritual father. Not long afterwards

92 Reading *dhaw da-'raq<w menneh>*; the text as it stands must be corrupt.

93 John 8:44.

94 The reference is to the Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry (232/3–c.305) and his 'Against the Christians'; at a later date, thanks to the popularity of his *Eisagoge* to Aristotle's *Organon*, Porphyry was even described as 'the master of all sciences, after the likeness of the godhead' (David bar Paulos, *Letters*, cited in Brock 1984, chapter V, 25).

95 The term is frequently found in papyri of this period; as Kiessling 1969, 370, points out, it is not always clear if it refers to a specific office or not.

96 In the absence of a date, the Prefect cannot be identified (Kosmas was sent by Zeno in 487 [see note to 141], and when he returned he was succeeded by Arsenios [*PLRE* II, 152 ('Arsenius 2')]); cf. Palme 2007, 248 n. 12).

he departed for ‘the eternal tabernacles’,⁹⁷ to join Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom. Athanasios lived on a while, and succeeded in baptizing many of the pagans there, instilling zeal [44] into many to emulate him in his way of life. He then rejoined the godly Stephanos and Paralios, their shared disciple, attaining to an end and blessed state that is reserved for those who have lived a God-fearing life.

59. {13} Let no one imagine that this digression is irrelevant to our main concern, for my purpose was to show that the great Severos was completely unconnected with the activities imputed to him, seeing that he was regularly in the company of these people who manifested such zeal against the pagans, praising what they were doing. Far from ever being under reproach for being stained by the error of paganism, he was in fact a Christian in his belief, but for the moment just a catechumen, even though he had no time to show himself to be one, as he openly did later, in Phoenicia. This was because he was occupied with the study of classical culture. The following fact also indicates that he was above any suspicion of pagan leanings in Alexandria: shortly after the destruction of the idols, the Christ-loving Menas, who had prophesied that Severos would become an archbishop,⁹⁸ departed from this human life; Severos straightaway set off to pay respects to this man whom he loved, who had abounded in so many virtues – in virginity of both soul and body, in compassion and love, [45] along with a great calm and humility.

60. Now at that time I had been afflicted with a bodily illness and the pagans thought that we were being punished for what we had done to their gods, consigning them to the flames in our zeal for the true religion. They spread the rumour that I would definitely die at that time, but subsequently, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ I miraculously recovered from the illness. Afterwards, in the funeral discourse which I gave in honour of the renowned Menas,⁹⁹ I mentioned the eradication of the idols, and related how they had been consigned to the flames in the presence of all the people of the city, recounting everything in turn that had happened. This was by the graveside of a man whose great kindness and compassion had also been admired by the pagans previous to the zeal he showed against them. As a result the great Severos was so delighted with the account and took pride in what had been

⁹⁷ Luke 16:9 (the raising of Lazarus).

⁹⁸ In **11**, above.

⁹⁹ This does not survive; an idea of what such funerary orations were like can be gained from two orations for professors of law at Berytos to be found (surprisingly) in a fourth-century papyrus from Hermopolis: see Cribiore 2007a, 54–55.

said by me against the pagan gods, as if it had been his own words, that he applauded more than everyone else. This was even though the pagans who had been invited and had come and listened – not knowing what was going to be said – were so to speak in tears at this, and one of them in anger was led to exclaim [46], 'If you wanted to speak against the gods, why on earth did you drag us along to your friend's graveside?'

61. I felt obliged to mention all this because of the calumny I spoke of.¹⁰⁰ I had no wish to describe my own affairs, being a man plunged in sins and unworthy to relate the exploits of the circle of the great Stephanos, Athanasios and Paralios, nor indeed those of Menas and of their companions who acted so zealously with them. In particular this applies in the case of the subject of the present work, namely the great Severos, whose time in Phoenicia, and what happened to him there, I am about to relate.

62. { 14 } When the most laudable Severos was about to set off from Alexandria to go to Phoenicia for the purpose of studying law,¹⁰¹ and in the hopes of taking up the legal profession,¹⁰² he was urging me to go with him. I told him, however, that I still needed more time to study the writings of the rhetoricians and philosophers, in view of the pagans who think highly and make much of these studies. My aim was that, by means of these, we should be [47] more easily able to combat the pagans, on their own grounds. So Severos went off alone, a year before me. Once this year was completed, I too came to Berytos to study civil law. I was expecting to have to suffer all that newcomers to Berytos, who have come to study law, have to put up with from the *ediktalioi*¹⁰³ – not that they have to put up with anything shameful, but they do it just to make the spectators laugh, temporarily lording it over those they are making fun of in a playful way. I was thinking that Severos, today so revered, would be especially inclined to this sort of custom of the other students, seeing that he was still so young of age. So, on the first

100 In the opening sections.

101 For the famous Law School of Beirut, see above all Collinet 1925; and for studies there, Poggi 1986 and 2001; also Blázquez 1998. Though the teaching was formerly in Latin, by the end of the fifth century it had changed to Greek: for a discussion, see Rochette 1997, 167–74. Its possible site has now been located according to Curvers and Stuart 2005, 210–11.

102 Lit. 'profession of *dikanikē*', with a marginal gloss, 'he calls *dikanikē* the profession of the *scholastikoi*' (as in 13).

103 A marginal note reads 'the *ediktalioi* are those who are older than the *dipondioi*'. These were the second-year students, so-named because their primary text of study was Ulpian's *Libri ad Edictum*; Collinet 1925, 99; MacAdam 2001/2, 212–13. (For the programme of studies over four – or, optionally, five – years, see Collinet 1925, 223–43.)

day I went into the School of Leontios, the son of Eudoxios,¹⁰⁴ who was professor of law at that time – a man with a high reputation among everyone concerned with legal matters. I found the admirable Severos there, sitting together with the other students to hear the lectures on law. Afterwards, when I was imagining he would be hostile (in his attitude) towards me, I saw that in fact he was well disposed towards me. He came up to me and greeted me first, smiling and happy, [48] for which I gave thanks to God for this small miracle.

63. Now it so happened that we were *dipondii*¹⁰⁵ at that time, and when we had completed the class (*praxis*) and were ready to leave and go, his contemporaries stayed behind for some reason of their own; but I had dashed off to the holy church known as the Anastasia¹⁰⁶ to pray, going afterwards to the church of Mary, the Bearer of God, in the centre of the city, situated near the harbour. After praying there, I was wandering in front of the church, {15} and shortly afterwards that man of God approached me. He greeted me warmly and then said, ‘God has brought you to this city all for my sake; tell me, how should I be saved?’ I raised my eyes to heaven in joy and gave praise to God who had put this thought into his head, and so brought him to asking about salvation. ‘Since you are asking about matters concerning the love of God, come along with me’, I replied, taking him by the hand,¹⁰⁷ ‘and let me bring you to the church of the Bearer of God. There I will recount to you what I have learnt from the divine Scriptures and the holy Fathers.’ On hearing this, he was asking me whether I had on me any books by the great Basil and the renowned Gregory, and other such teachers. When I told

104 He features in the Codex Justinianus, 1.17.2.9. Apart from this he is only known from the present text; *PLRE* II, 672 (‘Leontius 20’); Collinet 1925, 141–54 (esp. 147–49); Berger 1944/5, 10–12; Szabat 2007, 275 (no. 167).

105 The name given to the first-year students: Collinet 1925, 99. The term has contemptuous overtones, for the Latin *dupondii* normally refers to the low pay received by new recruits.

106 If this is the same church as that ‘of the Resurrection’ in **71**, then Anastasia will be a corruption of Anastasis, a church which Ps.Zacharias, *HE* IV.9 (tr. 149) specifically identifies with the one built by bishop Eustathius in the mid-fifth century. For the churches of Berytos, see Hall 2004, 172–76 (much of her information in fact derives from the *VSev.*) and Jabre Mouawad 2010. The probable location of the Anastasia has now been identified: see Curvers and Stuart 2005, 210–11, with figs. 9–13 (I thank Dr Ray Jabre Mouawad for drawing my attention to this article).

107 Here as elsewhere the narrative of this episode has some striking parallels with Zacharias’ *Disputatio* (see note 110): could Severos have served as a partial model for Zacharias’ unnamed interlocutor at the beginning of the work (even though there Zacharias arrives in Berytos before the interlocutor)?

him I would produce many works by these authors he came with me to the church of the Bearer of God.¹⁰⁸ [49] When he had joined me in the appropriate prayers, he asked me the same question. I then began with the book of Creation as described by the great Moses, pointing out God's concern for us – how, after the creation of all that exists, when he also brought us out of non-existence into existence, he had placed our first parents in Paradise, and how he had given to them a saving law, one leading to salvation concerning what they ought to do,¹⁰⁹ seeing that they were rational and autonomous beings. But when they despised the sovereign commandments, led astray by the serpent, they were driven from this life of bliss and they exchanged immortality for the death with which they had been threatened beforehand through the law.

64. While telling him this, I pointed out Adam and Eve who were depicted in the church clothed in garments of skin, subsequent to the Fall.¹¹⁰ Then I pointed out the many sufferings that had come about as a result (of the Fall), and the extent of the error, and the hold of the demons that we have brought upon ourselves of our own will, by listening to him who was the initiator of all rebelliousness. I went on to speak of God's compassion towards us: because he is good, he did not turn away from his creature that had got lost, seeing that it had been destined for incorruption when it had come into existence from non-existence, not suffering any of what belongs to human nature, [50] for it would have received immortality, on top of human nature, if it had kept God's law. I also spoke of how, after the natural law, God gave the written law, through Moses, and assisted human nature by means of the many holy prophets. But because God saw that the wound required greater healing than these could provide, the Word of God, the very Creator God, visited us when he became a human being in conformity with the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit: being the Daystar from on high, he illumined us who were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death¹¹¹ when, by the Holy Spirit, he was conceived in the flesh and came forth from a virgin's

¹⁰⁸ The church dedicated to Mary is mentioned again in **91**.

¹⁰⁹ Gen. 1–2.

¹¹⁰ The church here is that of the Theotokos, and so different from 'the church of Eustathios', mentioned as having striking paintings in Zacharias' *Disputatio de Mundi Opificio* (*Dialogue with Ammonios*) PG 85, 1023–25; (Eustathios being the name of the bishop who built it towards the middle of the fifth century, though the name here turns out to be a [well-informed] marginal gloss: see the edition by Colonna 1973, 96); cf. Collinet 1925, 64–68; Hall 2004, 173. For the identification of Eustathios' church with that of the Resurrection, see note 101.

¹¹¹ Luke 1:78–79.

unspotted womb, by the power of the Holy Spirit, preserving the mother as a virgin. And this was the first demonstration that he gave of his divinity, effecting a conception without seed or corruption, and a miraculous birth that went beyond the norms of nature.

65. Since he wished to deliver us from the control of the Devil, that rebel to whom we had sold ourselves, he voluntarily accepted in the flesh the cross on our behalf. Then, having given his body as a (means of) salvation to death, he arose on the third day, having dissolved the tyranny of the Devil and his assistants, the evil demons, along with the power of death as well. Having raised us together with himself, he seated us, along with himself, in heaven, as it is written¹¹² [51] and showed us a new path of salvation that leads to heaven. When he had netted¹¹³ the whole universe by means of his apostles, he extinguished the oracles of pagan magic and the sacrifices to demons, establishing the one catholic Church in the whole world. He taught us to repent and thereby to take refuge in saving baptism which symbolizes the three-day burial and resurrection of Christ, the Saviour of us all.

66. After I had added innumerable other demonstrations from the books of the Gospels, I said to Severos, ‘So it’s needful, my friend, that all those who are in their right mind should take refuge in him, by means of this life-giving baptism.’ ‘You have spoken well,’ he said. ‘but now we need to find a mode of life, seeing that my concern here is the study of the law.’ I said to him, ‘If you are willing to listen (to me) – or rather, to the divine words (of Scripture) and to the universal teachers of the Church, first of all, avoid shameful spectacles: horse racing, the theatre,¹¹⁴ and the sight of wild animals set against wretched human beings. After that, preserve your body in purity, and offer up to God the evening prayers each day after diligent study of the law. For it is right that we, who possess this knowledge (of God), should perform the evening services in the holy churches, [52] while others are often occupying themselves with playing dice, or rolling around in a

¹¹² Eph. 2:6.

¹¹³ The imagery of the Apostles as fishermen catching people in their net is widely found; its origin goes back to Matt. 4:19.

¹¹⁴ The theatre in Beirut has now been located at the juncture between Wadi Abu Jamil Street and the Rue de France (thus not far from the hippodrome); an article on it by H. Curvers is to appear in the *Bulletin d’archéologie et d’architecture libanaises* (BAAL). (My thanks to Dr Ray Jabre Mouawad for this information.) Polemic against theatre-going is to be found in many asides in John Chrysostom’s *Homilies on Matthew*; roughly contemporary with Zacharias’ ‘Life’ are the verse homilies on the theatre by Jacob of Serugh (alas, poorly preserved), and several of Severos’ own *Cathedral Homilies* (e.g. 41, 54, 82, 87 and 113).

drunken state, as they drink in the company of prostitutes, or (do something else) utterly shameful.'

67. (Severos) promised to act in this way, keeping to these (instructions), adding, 'Except don't make me into a monk! I am a law-student, and my great interest is in the law. If you want to add anything else, say so.' Delighted, I said, 'I came to this city to study civil law, being interested in the legal profession. But because you are concerned also with your salvation, I will tell you of a way of action that won't harm your study of the law, or require very much time, but will provide a preparation for rhetoric, philosophy and a knowledge of the divine words (of Scripture) and of doctrine.' 'What is this?', he said; 'It is a large and weighty promise, if it is (really) possible to have all these benefits, especially the last, the best of all, without our neglecting our law studies.' 'From what I've learnt, we study law the whole week apart from Sunday and Saturday afternoon.¹¹⁵ [53] We go to the law lectures provided for us on these other days by our teachers, and afterwards we work over them again by ourselves; then we have a rest for half a day on Saturday, prior to the Sunday which the civil law, too, instructs that we consecrate to God.¹¹⁶ If, then, it is pleasing to you, we will set aside this time for the Doctors of the Church and their writings; I'm talking about Athanasius the Great, Basil, Gregory,¹¹⁷ Cyril¹¹⁸ and the rest. Leaving our fellow students to occupy themselves as they like, we will give ourselves delight with the theological insights and the abundant teaching of the writings of the Church.'

68. (Severos) replied, 'My friend, this is why I asked you whether you had brought this load (of books) with you. Now that, with God's help, we have a plan of action, you must assure for us all that you have spoken of, for I will not leave your side during the times just mentioned.'

69. We were both pleased with the plan and put it into action. We began with writings against the pagans by various ecclesiastical authors; then we read the Hexameron by Basil,¹¹⁹ [54] the all-wise, followed by single treatises¹²⁰

115 For what is known about teaching in the Law School, see Collinet 1925, 243–56.

116 Although Constantine had made Sunday a day of rest in 321, the emperor Leo had to repeat this in 464/5, according to the Zuqnin Chronicle (*Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum*, ed. J.B. Chabot, CSCO Scr. Syri 43; 1927: I, 227).

117 Gregory of Nazianzus (rather than Gregory of Nyssa) will be intended.

118 Probably Cyril of Alexandria, rather than Cyril of Jerusalem, is meant.

119 CPG 2835.

120 Or 'monastic treatises'; according to Darling Young, in her translation, the reference is to Basil's *Asketikon*, but the reference could be wider.

by him, his letters, the treatise addressed to Amphilochios,¹²¹ the refutation addressed to Eunomios,¹²² the allocution (*prosphōnētikon*) to the young,¹²³ in which he teaches them how to profit from pagan writings. We continued with treatises by the three godly Gregorys,¹²⁴ those of John, and the famous ones of Cyril.¹²⁵

70. {17} As far as these were concerned, it was only I and Severos who thus busied ourselves during the times mentioned. But we used to go, along with the others, each day to the Evening Service. For these we had with us the admirable Evagrius¹²⁶ who had expressly come to Berytos, prompted by God, to prepare many of the young people to exchange the vanity of the legal profession for the divine philosophy. He was from Samosata and had been educated in the schools of Antioch the Great.¹²⁷ Now it happened that when he was young, he had one of those passions of youth and went to see some spectacle that took place in the city, but in a riot that took place there he got wounded. Subsequently, chastened by this wound, he had an abhorrence for lascivious spectacles and frequented holy churches. He attached himself to some people who at that time spent the whole [55] night singing in the church of the renowned proto-martyr Stephen.¹²⁸ These men held to an active (life of) philosophy, and for the most part were not a whit inferior to the solitaries. Having applied himself to this preliminary stage, he wanted to go on and choose the monastic life fully; however, he was constrained by his father to go to Phoenicia to study law. This was at the same time that I came there. It was for the same purpose that the admirable Elisha also came there at the very same time. He was from the region of Lycia; a very gentle and humble man, he was simple in his manners, and full of compassion for those in need of food or clothing.¹²⁹

121 This is the famous work *On the Holy Spirit*, CPG 2839.

122 CPG 2837.

123 CPG 2867.

124 Presumably Gregory Thaumaturgus and Gregory of Nyssa, beside Gregory of Nazianzus.

125 Presumably John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria.

126 Not known from other sources.

127 Probably rhetorical schools are meant: already in the third century there were evidently several, cf. Eusebius, *HE* IX.29.2. The schools in Antioch centred around particular individuals (most famously Libanius, or for Christians, Diodore), rather than locations (though Diodore seems to have been based in a monastery); see Downey 1961, 314.

128 Only known from this text; for the churches of Berytos, see note to **63**.

129 Anon., *VSev.* 32–33 likewise comments on his character.

71. Being in their company I felt I had, as it were, a nurse. Seeing that they were religiously inclined, I asked them if I could offer up evening prayers to God along with them. Once we had agreed on this, after we had applied ourselves to the study of the law and the work involved in this, we used to gather every evening in the church named after the Resurrection.¹³⁰ As a result, many other people would join us, and most important of all, the renowned Severos, following the agreement we had made between ourselves. Then there was Anastasios, who came from Edessa, Philippos who was from Patara in Lycia; and with them, Anatolios the Alexandrian. They were religiously minded men [56] and leading figures in the field of Civil Law, having already studied it for four years.¹³¹ They (all) asked to join our ranks. We also had with us Zenodoros, of pious memory, who had come to Berytos after us; he originated from the coastal district of Gaza, like me. Having had a successful career as an advocate (*scholastikos*) in the Royal Stoa here, he passed on from human life at about this time. Another person who shared this companionship was Stephanos the Palestinian, who had subsequently come here.¹³²

72. The head of this holy group was Evagrius. In his actions he was indeed a philosopher of our Lord Jesus Christ: he fasted just about every day, and he used up the great flower of his youth (devoting himself) to the divine philosophy, tormenting his body with vigils. He did not take a bath at all, apart from once a year, the day before the Paschal Feast of the great Resurrection of Christ, the Saviour of us all.

73. Gradually the great Severos came to rival Evagrius in both *praktikē* and *theoria*,¹³³ for he was reading (texts) with me in the way I have spoken of. Once he had become well acquainted with the words of the Doctors of the Church, [57] thereby gaining something of the *theoria* of the divine philosophy, along with elements of the active philosophical life, he fixed

130 This is evidently the same church as the 'Anastasia' (= *Anastasis*, 'Resurrection'), mentioned in 63.

131 This passage, indicating that they were now in their fifth year of study, provides the essential evidence that, beyond the normal four-year course of studies, there was also an optional fifth year: Collinet 1925, 237 (and 229–31 for the four-year curriculum).

132 Stephanos and Philippos, along with Elisha, are also mentioned in Anon., *VSev.* 28. The names of known students of law at Beirut were collected by Collinet 1925, 84–98 (and table, 114–15).

133 The terminology probably reflects that of Gregory of Nazianzus (see note to 139), rather than that of Evagrius of Pontus (d. 399), whose threefold classification of spiritual engagement (*praktikē*, *phusikē* and *theologikē*) was extremely influential, and which Zacharias uses in 138.

his gaze on the mode of conduct of the admirable Evagrius, using him as an exemplar, model and living icon. Seeing in him the true Christian philosopher who did not just proceed on the basis of words alone – in the way that I and many others do – but by putting these (words) into practice, he used to imitate him and his virtues. He would also torment his body with fasting, rivalling Evagrius's sober life and his other virtues; he kept away from eating meat, not because it is something evil, as the Manichaeans say, but because keeping away from meat brings a person closer to the (goal of the) philosophical (life).¹³⁴ For much of the year he did not go to the baths, ending up by only doing so on the same day as Evagrius.

74.¹³⁵ {18} While we were living in this way, it so happened that some of the law students in the city were gaining a reputation for magic practices. These included a certain Georgios, who came from Thessalonike, the chief city of the Illyrian people, Chrysaorios from Tralles, a city of Asia, a certain Asklepiodotos from [58] Heliopolis, along with an Armenian and some others of a similar bent. They had as an assistant John, called 'the Fuller', who was from Thebes in Egypt. They were assiduous in godless activities such as the following.

75. They collected together books of magic from every quarter and showed them to some people who liked to cause trouble. Everyone thought that they had in mind some evil act of murder: according to the rumour about them that took hold, they were going to sacrifice to the demons an Ethiopian slave belonging to the man from Thebes, doing this by night in the hippodrome.¹³⁶ Their aim in carrying out such an action that provokes God's wrath was so that they might have, as a minister for their projects, a demon who, they said, was attached to them. So they supposed. Their general concern was to bring about any lawless deed, but in particular, by means of demonic compulsion, to force a woman, currently living in chastity, to fall in love with the owner of the slave who had a passionate desire for her. Accordingly, they bring along the slave to the hippodrome, as if for some other purpose, at an untimely hour of the night. When they were about to carry out the audacious murder, God, who is concerned with men's actions, had compassion on that

¹³⁴ For this, see Haussleiter 1935, esp. 323.

¹³⁵ For the campaign against magic in **74–102**, see especially Trombley 1994, II, 29–45; Sfameni Gasparro 2006; and Marasco 2011, 398–400; also Hall 2004, 109–10. For magical texts found in Egypt, see Shandruk 2012.

¹³⁶ The site of the hippodrome in Wadi Abu Jmil in Beirut has now firmly been identified, thanks to the discovery of the *spina*; see Curvers and Stuart 2005, 211–13.

wretched slave [59] and made some people pass by there. Fearful of their intended crime and of what had unexpectedly happened, they took to flight. This gave the Ethiopian the opportunity to escape from their murderous clutches, just when they were all ready to kill him.

76. The Ethiopian slave informed a relative of his master about what had been plotted against him. Now this man was a serious Christian, fearful of the judgement of God. Out of concern for his relative who owned the slave, and out of pity for the slave, he told us of the plot of these people and their intention to kill the slave, at the same time asking for some Christian help for the soul of his relative that had been attacked by demons. He was concerned for the man because he was a relative, he said.

77. When we heard all this we asked him if (his relative) possessed any books of magic: for the fact that the man had an interest in magic was known by virtually all those who were studying law in the city. 'Yes', he said, adding that the Ethiopian had said this. We – that is, Evagrius and I, and the brothers Isidoros and Athanasios from Alexandria, who were both fervent believers, along with the man who had informed us about all this – decided to take advice from Konstantinos¹³⁷ and Polykarpos,¹³⁸ who were from Berytos, [60] about what we should do. The former man had for a long time been in practice as an advocate (*dikanikē*) in the city, while the latter was a military man in the entourage (*taxis*) of the prefect (*huparchos*). The two of them were experienced in (such) matters, and they were also to be found in our company in the holy churches. Furthermore, the man who was being accused of such a grave matter was also considered to be a friend of Konstantinos.

78. Once we had spoken what was necessary with these men, and deliberated a great deal how, with God's help, we might liberate that man from the error of the demons and the danger in which he stood, we decided to go all together to the man's house and speak in a friendly way with him, saying that we had come to him as to a brother, and were concerned for his good reputation (*hupolēmpsis*);¹³⁹ and that we would like to take a look at his books because of the suspicion that had taken hold concerning him. Then, (we said), we would be able, with God's help, to put an end to the report that had spread all over the city concerning him if we found that he was free from involvement in such matters.

¹³⁷ Mentioned again in **79** and **90**. He is known only from this text; *PLRE* II, 313 ('Constantine 10').

¹³⁸ *PLRE* II, 895–96; he became *Praefectus Praetorio Orientis* in 498.

¹³⁹ For *hupolēmpsis*; cf. Lampe, s.v., 3a.

79. The plan seemed to us a good one, and we went off to his house. He received us, both because of his relative, and because of Konstantinos his friend – and also because we all appeared to be calm and unassuming. So we spoke with him [61] in a very gentle way what had seemed best to us. But first of all we urged him to accept in a brotherly way whatever was said, and not to take badly (our) mentioning these matters.

80. Now he had hidden his books of magic under the chair on which he sat, having made this in the form of a chest (*thēkē*) that was concealed from the sight of visitors. Accordingly he said in a confident manner, ‘Since this is your wish, seeing that you are friends, take a good look at my books, just as you like.’ Having said this, he produced all the books there were on open display in his house. Once we had taken a close look at these and failed to find anything of what was the object of the search, the man’s slave, against whom they had plotted foul sacrificial murder, secretly pointed out to us the seat in question, gesturing to us that ‘if you remove just one board, straight-away the books that are being looked for will become visible at once’. When we had done this, the man realized that his artifice was clear to everyone; he threw himself down on his face, supplicating us with tears not to hand him over to the laws, seeing that we were Christians and God-fearing people.

81. Our reply to him was that we had not come to do him any harm, as God was witness, but we were desirous for the healing and salvation of his soul. [62] But he needed to burn these books of magic with his own hands, for they contained various pictures of evil demons, barbarous names, and arrogant and harmful promises, full of pride, as completely suited evil demons. Some of them were attributed to Zoroaster the Magian,¹⁴⁰ others to the magician Ostanēs,¹⁴¹ and others again to Manetho.¹⁴²

82. He promised to do this, and gave orders for fire to be brought. In the meantime he related to us how he had fallen in love with a woman, but when she had refused to have anything to do with him, he imagined that he could win her over by resorting to this evil art. He also added that, so feeble

140 For works attributed to Zoroaster in Greek, see Bidez and Cumont 1938, I, 85–163; and for the present passage, see II, 246–47 and 306–07.

141 Ostanēs was thought to have come to Greece with Xerxes, and to have taught Demokritos; for works in Greek attributed to him, see Bidez and Cumont 1938, I, 167–212. He was later to play a role in Arabic where he is associated with Hermes: van Bladel 2009, 48–57.

142 Manetho, an Egyptian priest of a temple in Heliopolis in the early third century BC, was author of the *Aiguptiaka*, a history of Egypt; for his featuring in Christian apologetic literature, see Hornung 2010, 4–5.

was the magician's craft, and so useless were its promises, that the woman just hated him all the more! He was not the only person to use sorcery and magic all because of her, but many others had done so too. And he listed their names as well, saying that they too were in possession of similar books.

83. When fire was brought for him, he threw all the books of magic into it with his own hands. He said that he thanked God who had held him worthy to be visited, and who had liberated him from error and servitude to the demons. He said he was actually a Christian, the son of Christian parents, but he had been led astray during the time mentioned and had worshipped idols, to please the evil demons. He also said that he needed to offer repentance and tears commensurate with his sin.

84. After the burning [63] of those books, so odious in God's eyes, we all had a meal together, having first prayed and given praise to God, thanking him for what had happened. For it had just been time for the mid-day meal, and we ate what each of us had brought along from his house, all prepared for lunch. Among the food there was also some meat, for we had expressly provided some meat to eat, so that the man would share it with us. This was because it is said that those who are given to magic and have recourse to demons abstain from eating meat, considering it unclean.

85. After we had eaten we went to the church (*haykla*)¹⁴³ of the most honourable apostle, the holy Judas,¹⁴⁴ brother of James the Just, both of them being the sons of Joseph who was betrothed to the holy ever-virgin Mary, Bearer of God; this is how they are called 'the brothers of our Lord'. The priest and guardian (*paramonarios*)¹⁴⁵ of this church was a certain Kosmas. This God-fearing man was assiduous in his ministry and the care he showed;

¹⁴³ The Syriac term can variously denote the nave or the sanctuary, or the entire church building.

¹⁴⁴ The church is also mentioned by Severos (*Sixth Book of Select Letters*, 4.9; tr. p.271, where he calls Judas a martyr, adding that he was buried there; it evidently lay outside the city walls (cf. Jabre Mouawad 2010, 2–7). The elaborate identification of this Judas, based on Matt. 13:55 and Acts 1:13, was necessary, not only to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, but perhaps also to counter a tradition that Judas was the same person as Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus; it is Thaddaeus (the Addai of Syriac tradition), however, who is said to have died in Berytos (Acts of Thaddaeus, #8). The identification of Judas and James as sons of Joseph goes back to the statement in the Protogospel of James (9.2) that Joseph already had sons, and the identification of one of them as James in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (16.1); for the confused traditions concerning Jude, see Bauckham 1990, chapters 1 and 2, and Haase 1922, 274.

¹⁴⁵ The *paramonarios* of a church might be either a priest (as here, where 'administrator' might also be a possible translation), or a lay person (corresponding roughly to a modern verger).

an ascetic, he was adorned with all the Christian virtues: he carried out the divine office in due fashion, together with John, the Palestinian, also known as ‘the sturdy’ (*eudranēs*). [64] This man, after training in the law, had consecrated himself to God in that church, adopting the philosophical life-style. Thanks to his manner, he benefited many of those studying law in that city, also because of the (collection of) Christian books that he owned, which he shared and gave out. He was the man whom Menas the Cappadocian, who was also studying civil law, subsequently emulated, to the extent that he received the monastic habit in that very church before returning to Caesarea, his city, to be numbered among its clergy. John, because of the (monastic) habit which he had received from the very beginning, did not want to suffer any of the things of youth, instead set off (on the journey) to God in the habit which he had.

86. We therefore related to those around Kosmas and John what had happened about the burning of these books, and we besought them to pray to God for the soul of that man who had been caught up for a short time in the error of demons, as described (above), so that (God) would entirely liberate this (soul) from error and grant to the man true repentance, while preserving all of us from the evil of the demons. Once the priest had said many prayers on behalf of the man, everyone returned home. After this, for a while the man was to be found with us in the holy [65] churches, offering up repentance and tears because of his previous sins.

87. It was through him that we came to know of all those in the city who had a liking for magic and who possessed books of magic. Accordingly we investigated how we might get hold of those too, and all who were in the grip of paganism and were dazzled by pagan sacrifices. The majority of the people named in this connection by the Egyptian were known to us from Alexandria. We were assisted in all this by the advice of the great Severos, who took an active interest in what was going on, and gave us advice on how we should act. In view of this, the author of the completely false account¹⁴⁶ should blush with shame: the unconvincing calumnies against Severos that he has put together are figments of his own invention.

88. While we were all in a state of amazement as we pondered over the events surrounding the burning of these books that were so hateful to God, and the repentance of the Egyptian man – for news of them had spread

¹⁴⁶ That is, the scurrilous pamphlet of 2 that led Zacharias to write this counterblast. He refers to it again in 93, 103 and 125.

everywhere – it so happened that a copyist informed Martyrios, a Reader of the holy church of that city,¹⁴⁷ and Polykarpos, whom I mentioned earlier¹⁴⁸ – both diligent men [66] who showed zeal in such matters – that George from Thessalonike had given him a book of magic, to make a copy from the original. These two men then informed us of what they had been told. We then informed John, the God-loving bishop of the city,¹⁴⁹ concerning Georgios, Asklepiodotos from Heliopolis, Chrysaorios from Tralles, and Leontios who at that time was a *magistros*¹⁵⁰ – all of whom were studying law in the city – as well as some others. For the Egyptian man had informed us that they were this way inclined, and rumours of this kind concerning them had taken hold among just about all the city's inhabitants. The bishop then provided us with some members of the clergy, instructing us to examine the books of all these men, having with us some public officials. The entire city was in a state of commotion over all this, seeing that so many students were studying books of this sort instead of the law, and that they were being harmed by the above-mentioned Leontios, by reason of his paganism.

89. Now Leontios was a man skilled in deception. Instead of being trained in the propaedeutic arts, he promised horoscopes and predictions of the future; [67] and to all those who got involved with him he (promised) appointments as prefects and leading functionaries, and he would get them involved in recourse to idols. Such was his skill in deception that <he even deceived> one of the leading men at that time, who was living in Byblos, for the following story is told of him: when (this man's) wife was pregnant he asked (Leontios) whether she would give birth to a boy or a girl; the latter, making the semblance of making some feigned calculations by his fatuous art, said, 'She will give birth to a boy.' After (Leontios) had left the man's house, he took the woman doorkeeper aside and said to her, 'I was asked by the master of the house whether his wife would give birth to a boy or a girl,

147 Readers constituted a minor order of the Church; a prayer for their appointment (*cheirotonia*) is given in the *Apostolic Constitutions* VIII.22. For copyists, see the annotation to **2**.

148 In **71**.

149 Bishop John is also known from the entry on Rabbula of Samosata in the *Synaxarium Constantinopolitanum*, 19 February; he was the author of a short surviving paschal homily (CPG 6720), ed. Aubineau 1972, 281–304, esp. 284–89. Cf. Honigsmann 1951, 32; and Hall 2004, 181 (also index).

150 Collinet 1925, 100–01 (with 310), is very probably correct in seeing the term *magistros* here as having the sense of president of the association of students; in this case the Leontios here is a completely different person from the Leontios of **62**, and so the second paragraph of 'Leontios 20' in then *PLRE* II, 672 (where they are conflated) should be deleted.

and I told him, “a boy”, because I did not want to cause him sorrow before the time, seeing that he is longing for a son. But to you I am going to tell the truth, but for the moment keep it to yourself, hidden, for it will certainly be a girl who will be born.’ Having said this, he left. Subsequently, when the woman gave birth to a girl, the man was aggrieved at the deception, and he gave orders that Leontios should come and be accused of falsehood. (Leontios), however, took refuge in the testimony of the woman doorkeeper: because she enjoyed the honour (due to) old age, it was considered that she merited credence. [68]

90. We were in a position to know where the books of magic belonging to Georgios and Asklepiodotos were, and we brought them along to the middle of the city, but in the case of those belonging to the others, we did not yet (know their whereabouts), seeing that the (men) had escaped and hidden them away. Now Chrysaorios incited against us some troublemakers from the people known as PWRW,¹⁵¹ whom the students studying law customarily call ‘the gang’ – insolent people who live an arrogant life, on many occasions involving murder, not sparing (the use of) the sword. However, all the populace, being fervently religious and motivated against these people, promised to help us; and Konstantinos, of Berytos, who was the manager of a large and powerful estate, was threatening to bring along (a band of) peasants against them, and lay hands on the leaders of ‘the gang’. Nevertheless, in order that the affair should not end up in some sort of bad outcome, when Leontios was grabbed by some (over-)zealous people and was about to find himself in danger, we only just managed to find an escape to safety for him. Seeing that we had incited them, it would not have been easy for us to punish these people for their zeal, if we had failed to restrain the violence of the mischief that was being done by them. And in particular (our aim) was to convert the souls of those men (sc. ‘the gang’) to the fear of God, just as the Law of God bids when it says ‘I do not desire the death of sinners, but that (a sinner) should be converted and live.’¹⁵²

91. Because our immediate concern was to burn those books of magic that had already been seized – and for this purpose we had taken along, on the bishop’s instructions, the city’s public prosecutor (*ekdikos*) and some public

151 Nau thought this might be as an error for *pwnw*, *phonoī* ‘murderous ones’, while Kugener suggested *por<n>oi*, and Ambjörn *pōroi* ‘stones’, and translates ‘the tough ones’; none of these seems fully convincing, but nothing better comes to mind (the ending -w = Greek -oi rules out *phōres* ‘thieves’).

152 Ezek. 33:11, cf. 18:23..

officials (*dēmosioi*) as well as some of the clergy – we made a public show of the fire for these in front of the church of the holy Virgin and God-Bearer Mary:¹⁵³ everyone was watching the books of magic with their demonic signs go up in flames; but first they were hearing the person who was assigning them to the fire read out the arrogance of their contents: the godless and barbaric boasting of the demons with their evil promises and hatred of human beings, the insolence of the devil who taught them to make bitter promises and outcomes such as these. Examples of what they promised are: how cities should be put into turbulence, peoples incited, parents up in arms against their children, and against their children's children, by what means legal marriages and cohabitations can be destroyed, how someone can take off by force, for the purposes of illicit lust, [70] a woman who wishes to live a chaste life, or how brazenly to commit adultery or murder, or keep a theft concealed, or how to force those who judge cases to give a verdict of victory on their behalf.

92. It was because of abominable promises of this sort that the entire populace raised an immense clamour against the pagan practices of magic, while their prayers and utterances of praise were for those who had gone to the trouble to have them unmasked and <their abominations> consigned to the fire.

93. These were the fruits of the great Severos' advice; by these means he gave leadership like a general, but in order not to be thought presumptuous, he kept quiet and applied himself to the study of the law. How then did the person who dissolved truth through his falsehood and fabrication bring an accusation that is totally undemonstrable and cannot stand up to any opposition?¹⁵⁴

94. {19} It happened that something else occurred a short time later. Certain vagabonds who lurk around sacrificial altars and practices of magic, the most evil crowd in the world, arrived in that city, promising that they could produce fortunes. They fabricated the following falsehood: when Darius, king of the Persians long ago, came to this region he hid great quantities of gold in places that had previously been cities. They added to their falsehood (saying) that there had been so and so many talents of gold, [71] (claiming) that they had learnt this from an account by Persian Magi.¹⁵⁵ Once they had

¹⁵³ Mentioned earlier in **63** (see also note to **64**).

¹⁵⁴ As in **87**, **103** and **125**, the reference is to the pamphlet of **2**.

¹⁵⁵ The reference will be to Zoroastrian clergy (rather than the Magi of Matt 2:1–12); for Greek texts attributed to Zoroaster and Ostanēs, see annotation to **81**.

invented this they were devising who could be found who would be likely to accept this falsehood, and who, through lack of intelligence and through the expectation of monetary gains, would also lose what he (already) had, and thus be caught by this Persian trick.

95. When these people learnt about Chrysaorios¹⁵⁶ they informed him of this fabrication. Readily accepting it all, he asked how they could get hold of these treasures. ‘The matter requires the use of necromancy’, they said, (adding) that they had among them someone who was suitable for such invocations, and that a location was needed that was hidden from the crowd so that – they claimed – they would not be caught in the act.

96. (Chrysaorios), being empty-headed <believed> these words, and since he had converse for some reason with the *paramonarios* of the so-called ‘Second Martyrion’,¹⁵⁷ he disclosed to him the promise of these treasures. Bowled over by (the thought of) the gold, he said that there were plenty of isolated tombs in the shrine that he looked after, and that it would be possible for them to carry out what they were up to at some untimely hour of the night.

97. So they all turned up at the Martyrion, having waited for such an (important) moment. Now these misguided sorcerers had said that silver utensils [72] were needed for this enterprise, so that they (themselves) might go to the nearby sea and invoke, by means of these, the demons guarding the treasures, while another person should engage in necromancy among the tombs at that shrine. (Lured) by the hope of gold, this unworthy minister of the martyrs was won over by Chrysaorios and he assisted them in this wicked deed. Chrysaorios gave the silver utensils to some of them – who only a little while afterwards ran off with them, once they had made the pretence of standing by the sea and invoking the demon guardians of these fictitious treasures. As for the *paramonarios*, he provided a silver censer from among the holy vessels for the man who promised to carry out the rites of necromancy and to summon forcibly the souls of the dead in order to learn from them about the treasures that were hidden in the ground.

¹⁵⁶ For him, see **74, 88, 90**; the Syriac translation loses the wordplay *chrusos* ‘gold’ (in **94**) and his name (which would seem to be based on the Homeric epithet of Apollo, *chrusaōr*, ‘of the golden bow’); the Syriac spelling of the name makes it unlikely that his name was Chryserōs, well attested from Asia Minor: see Corsten 2010, 466.

¹⁵⁷ The present text is the only source for this, cf. Jabre Mouawad 2010, 7. For *paramonarios*, see annotation to **85**.

98. Now when that sorcerer began on the demonic invocation and was carrying the censer, at that moment God straightaway punished them, causing the earth to shake beneath them,¹⁵⁸ with the result that they were all half dead with fright, expecting the whole shrine to collapse on top of them. Greatly upset, the misguided sorcerer, together with Chrysaorios, [73] only just managed to escape the danger they were in. As a result the paupers who used to sleep in that shrine raised a cry once they had become aware of what had been audaciously attempted, and they made the matter known in the city.

99. As a result of this the entire populace were stirred up anew against the pagans and the sorcerers: they raised a great clamour against the *paramonarios* who had proved unworthy of his calling, as previously against Chrysaorios as well when the commemoration and feast day of the all-praised John the Baptist and Forerunner was being celebrated.¹⁵⁹ The *paramonarios* was arrested and reprimanded by the bishop, after which he was sent to a monastery and forbidden by an interdiction from leaving it for a specific period. Chrysaorios, who at that point had fled the city, eventually bought his return to it by means of a quantity of gold.

100. Now Leontios, who had taken flight at the earlier commotion, had decided to receive holy baptism in the shrine of St Leontios.¹⁶⁰ Thus he returned, promising that he was now a Christian. Dressed in the white garments of the baptized,¹⁶¹ he begged forgiveness from everyone for what had earlier taken place. [74]

101. So that Chrysaorios should not imagine himself clever and suppose that it was through (the help of) the demons, magic and wealth that he alone had got off in the uprisings against him, and that the books of magic that

158 This earthquake has sometimes been taken to be the same that affected Tyre and Sidon badly in 494; Collinet 1925, 55; Plassard 1968, 12–13; this, however, seems unlikely, and the present events evidently took place several years earlier. (Beirut was to suffer a devastating earthquake in 551; this destroyed the law school.)

159 This may well have been the Eastern date, 7 January, rather than 24 June, which is of Western origin.

160 In Tripolis; the sanctuary was already an important shrine in the first half of the fifth century and Theodoret mentions processions held there. When he was patriarch Severos preached two homilies there on the saint's feast day (18 June), in 513 (Homily 27) and 514 (Homily 50). While the Greek texts (BHG 986–7d) date his martyrdom to the reign of Vespasian, the Syriac Acts (BHO 563), which are probably based on local tradition, place it under Diocletian and Maximian; see further the edition and discussion in Garitte 1968; also Fiey 1982.

161 The tradition of holding baptisms at Easter led to the following week being called 'the week of white (garments)', or 'White Week'.

he owned did not get burnt, the God of the martyrs whom he had spurned took vengeance on him in the following manner. When he decided to return to his country he hired a ship and loaded it with all the books of magic that he happened to have acquired – with a great quantity of gold, according to what those in the know said. He also loaded in the ship (his) law books and a quantity of silver vessels that he possessed, along with his children and their mother, who was his concubine. He gave instructions for the ship to set sail at a moment that he, along with many others, thought suitable on the basis of certain magic investigations and the movements of the stars, according to his calculations; he himself, however, would travel to his country by land. So the ship set sail, with the assurances of the demons and the astrologers that it would be preserved safely, along with those in it. However, despite the sorcery and the books of magic, the ship sank, with the result that nothing of what Chrysaorios had loaded on to it was saved. It was by this sudden punishment that the God of the martyrs chastised that senseless man [75] because he had been unwilling to appease (God) by means of repentance, or to call to mind that former punishment: like Pharaoh he had remained obstinate.¹⁶²

102. Even though it may seem pointless that episodes such as these should have been recounted, nevertheless, because they provide reproof for the (practice of) magic and for the error of the pagans, I considered it right that they should be included, for the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who catches the clever in their cunning, and who cast Pharaoh, along with his chariots and horsemen – and the wise men of Egypt – into the sea.¹⁶³ {20} In fact, these matters have not taken us out from our main concern at all, and it is to this that we now come, without any sort of digression.

103. It has been sufficiently demonstrated that the servant of God and bishop Severos had never in any way been ensnared by pagan sacrifices or the practice of magic, as the calumniator¹⁶⁴ – whoever he is – had the audacity to claim: he will have to give an account to God for such a false calumny in this world too if he is still alive; but if he has departed from human life, it will be at the Judgement, where no one can deceive. That [76] bishop,¹⁶⁵ both in Alexandria and in Phoenicia, was with people who were acting by the power

162 Cf. Exod. 7:14, etc.

163 Exod. 14:28, 15:4–5; the ‘wise men of Egypt’, however, do not feature here in the biblical text.

164 The author of the pamphlet mentioned in 2; cf. 87, 93 and 125.

165 I.e. Severos.

of God alone and of our Lord Jesus Christ, in opposition to the pagans, sorcerers and pagan gods. This was especially the case in Phoenicia, since (Severos) was already sufficiently adept in 'practical philosophy', imitating Evagrius,¹⁶⁶ as well as having a knowledge and theoretical (understanding) of (Christian) doctrines. This was something he had acquired especially from reading the authors of the Church. Once he was sufficiently proficient, he composed a panegyric on the divine Apostle Paul.¹⁶⁷ He offered up this first discourse to God, using it as a means of supplicating to be held worthy of saving baptism. As a result, all who encountered him admired his knowledge of the divine words (of Scripture) just as much as his application in his study of the law at that time.

104. When the admirable Evagrius made examination of this he reproached me forcefully, blaming me: 'Since (Severos) has been held worthy of such knowledge, and has made supplication to God concerning it, why does he delay from actually approaching the divine rite of baptism? How do we know whether he will remain with this present concern and wish? If he does not partake of the Holy Mysteries, [77] or is not straightaway held worthy of saving baptism, you will be subject to a mighty judgement because of him, since you were the person who first invited to such a knowledge a man who is delaying to manifest the fruits of repentance in baptism, or to receive the royal (baptismal) mark, or to be inscribed into the number of the soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if you have any concern for your own salvation and for his, get him to approach (this source of) divine grace at once.'

105. On hearing this, I went off to (see) him, and I reported to him the words of the God-loving Evagrius. He said, 'Are you wanting me to become filled with stains after the saving rite of baptism? I very frequently see young men caught up with prostitutes – and I am living in a city that is the source of pleasures. Wait until I have completed my study of the law, and then I will be baptized in Alexandria, to whose orthodox belief you are always testifying.'

'From where can we have any certainty of life, my good fellow?', I said, '– even for a single day, or just an hour or two. What excuse will we have before God the Provisioner of our lives and Judge if, after being held worthy

166 For Evagrius, see **70** (and especially **73**). Conceivably Zacharias is deliberately modelling this Evagrius on Evagrius of Pontus, whose writings, popular in monastic circles, were coming under suspicion for their 'Origenist' speculation in the early sixth century (eventually his writings were condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 553, but survive largely thanks to Syriac and Armenian translations).

167 This does not survive.

of such (knowledge), we do not obey when he says “If a person is not born of water and the Spirit, he will not enter the Kingdom of heaven”,¹⁶⁸ and “The person [78] who knows the will of his master but fails to carry it out will be beaten many times”,¹⁶⁹ and “If you will listen to my voice, do not harden your hearts so as to provoke to wrath.””¹⁷⁰

106. ‘Then act as my sponsor at baptism,¹⁷¹ and I will be baptised whenever you like.’

However, I excused myself for the following reason: I was not in communion with the bishops in Phoenicia,¹⁷² only with the holy fathers in Egypt and Palestine, whose leaders were mighty contenders for (true) religion: Peter, from the country of the Iberians,¹⁷³ who was bishop in the city of Gaza, on the shore of the sea, a man who shone out with his excellent philosophy and ascetic practice of the monastic life, accomplishing miracles like those of the Apostles; and John the Egyptian abbot, the bishop of Sebennyto;¹⁷⁴ and Theodore, bishop of Antinoe,¹⁷⁵ that great vessel of virtue, through whom God performed many wonders – as in the case of these others too – granting to a blind man the ability to see. Furthermore, there was that second prophet Isaiah of our days,¹⁷⁶ who not only inherited his name but also his charism,

168 John 3:5.

169 Luke 12:47.

170 Ps. 95(94):7–8

171 For the importance of sponsors for baptism in the early Church, see Dujarier 1962 (for the period 200–600, see his chapter 2).

172 On the grounds that they did not openly condemn the Council of Chalcedon. Whether or not to receive communion from a particular bishop was a matter of individual conscience; John, bishop of Beirut, was evidently either an open supporter of the Council, or he was just unwilling to condemn it. Evagrius, *HE* III.30, gives a good idea of the range of different positions people might take (Whitby 2000, 166–67).

173 Peter, a Georgian prince brought up as a hostage in the imperial Court in Constantinople, eventually escaped (in 437) to become a monk in Palestine; the monastery which he founded near Gaza became a focal point for anti-Chalcedonian monks; he died in 491. Zacharias’ *Life of Peter the Iberian* is almost entirely lost, but another *Life*, probably by John Rufus (*CPG* 7501), survives, re-edited with English translation by Horn and Phenix (2008). For the background, see Horn 2006, and more briefly in Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky 2000, 38–51. Peter likewise features in Anon., *VSev.* 20–22, and in Evagrius, *HE* II.5 (Whitby 2000, 79).

174 Mentioned in Zacharias, *Life of Isaías* 11, and in John Rufus *Plerophoriae* 63.

175 According to the *Life of Isaías*, 3, he was made bishop by Timothy Ailouros; see also John Rufus, *Plerophoriae* 38.

176 Isaías was the author of a work entitled the *Asketikon* (*CPG* 5555); this is best preserved in Syriac translation (ed. Draguet, CSCO 289–90, 293–94; 1968), and the existence of five recensions indicates its popularity in that language. A *Life* of him by Zacharias survives in Syriac translation (ed. Brooks 1907). Considerable confusion surrounds his identity: is this

shining out among the ascetics like the great Antony.¹⁷⁷ It was for this reason, then, that I declined doing this. [79]

107. 'Then urge the admirable Evagrius, who is so eager that I should acquire eternal life through baptism that brings salvation, to act as my spiritual father and sponsor for the faith. He is someone who is in communion with all the holy Churches. Then, if this seems a good idea to you, I will get baptized in the shrine of the all-praised martyr Leontios, in Tripolis.'¹⁷⁸

108. I promised I would gladly do this. When I urged the admirable Evagrius to take on sponsorship of Severos, at first he turned the request back to me, but I got him to accept by pointing out that this was appropriate, saying 'Just as you laid a duty on me, so I too am laying one on you, in return: it was I – with God's assistance – who brought the admirable Severos to consent gladly to your advice that he should by no means put off the baptismal charism out of fear, so it is right for you to become his spiritual father. Otherwise you will turn out to be hindering his salvation and you will make yourself guilty of the very same thing with which you threatened me!'

109. {21} We decided it was a good idea to disclose this plan to our other companions: we would go with him, all together, to the shrine of the godly Leontios in Tripolis, that is, myself, [80] the most virtuous Evagrius, Elisha – who had a soul as pure as gold – the admirable Anatolios, and the Christ-loving Zenodoros, as well as some others with us.

110. We brought him straightaway to John, that great philosopher of our Lord Jesus Christ, (trained in) both *praxis* and *gnōsis*.¹⁷⁹ He had been consecrated to God as a young boy, and ever since his childhood he had assiduously attended the altar of the holy shrine, just mentioned. His life was so filled with love for God that he had established, alongside the martyrion, an abode for (the practice of) the true philosophy, and he had persuaded many people to opt for the monastic life, shaking off the fetters of this world and casting away empty hopes that are no better than dreams, while holding

Isaias of Gaza the same person as Isaias of Sketis? Or are they two different persons? Chitty 1971 remains the best discussion (for more recent literature, see Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky 2000, 30–38; Horn 2006, 153; and Greatrex 2011, 13).

177 Thanks to the immensely popular *Life of Antony* by Athanasius, Antony (d. 356) was regularly seen as the originator of Egyptian monasticism. He is mentioned again in 135.

178 See annotation to 100.

179 This evidently corresponds to Gregory of Nazianzus' *praxis* and *theōria*, for which see note to 139.

in honour God's law in preference to all their possessions. Such were the fountains of tears that this John wept as a result of his abundant groans that one could see traces in his eyes of the constant flow that they produced.

111. Severos received instruction straightaway from John¹⁸⁰ who was endowed with spiritual insight as well as with the active virtues, being fully instructed in the divine mystagogy. From that moment on John was instructing him in the divine spiritual meaning (*theōria*) and the symbols of the baptismal rites, with the help of readings from the catechetical homilies of Gregory, brother of Basil the Great, who became bishop [81] of Nyssa,¹⁸¹ and of Cyril of Jerusalem,¹⁸² and the great John (Chrysostom).¹⁸³

112. Subsequently we came to the church and approached the priest and *paramonarios* of the martyrion, whose name was Leontios, and were asking him to baptize the great Severos. The virtuous John had (already) been in touch with Severos, the priest¹⁸⁴ of the holy church in Tripolis. He was a man adorned with a wealth of spiritual gifts, who exercised primacy over that city; he too had come to God through good works, holding the idea of pleasing God as more to be honoured than his profession as *scholastikos*. John had urged him and the clergy of the local church to assist us in this undertaking, and to prepare his house in readiness for the reception of the newly baptized. He came with us and saw to all the concerns we had in mind.

113. And so the man, who today is God's bishop, was baptized in the martyrion of the godlike victorious martyr Leontios,¹⁸⁵ and he was received from the font by the admirable Evagrius who became his spiritual father. Once he had participated in the Divine Mysteries, it became apparent the sort of person he would become, for such was the faith and deep feeling with which he approached God [82] that those who were present gave praise to God.

114. Because after the seventh day he had to remove and put away the white (baptismal) garments that symbolize liberty, he was downcast for a while: it

180 In **140** and **150** John is mentioned alongside Theodoros, and both are described as 'heirs' of Peter the Iberian.

181 *CPG* 3150.

182 *CPG* 3585.

183 *CPG* 4460–72.

184 Possibly the bishop of Tripolis is meant; this would very probably be the case if the John of **110–11** was the same as John, bishop of Berytos, mentioned in **88**, though this is very uncertain.

185 Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 18. Severos' baptism here is also mentioned in Evagrius, *HE* III.33 (Whitby 2000, 175).

was as if he was desirous to go straight on from there to God, dressed in that state: such was the extent to which he was gripped by grief, and so great was his understanding and awareness of the divine and mystical rite of baptism.

115. {22} After the customary fixed number of days we returned to the city of Berytos, furnished with the prayers of the godly martyr and these admirable people. Such progress did Severos make in the virtuous life, imitating his (spiritual) father, that he was just about fasting on a daily basis. He did not go to the baths at all, and not only did he attend the evening Offices in God's churches, but he also very often spent much of the night there. As a result, while his body grew thinner and his flesh wasted away, his virtue became all the more exalted.

116. Thus did he take refuge in God. At the same time, for the other days (of the week) he was unremittingly reading and studying the laws, so that he was as well prepared as if he were a teacher of the laws. Such was the judgment concerning him in the eyes of many [83] of the students reading law, who knew how to judge excellence without any hint of envy. But as for the time we had agreed upon among ourselves from the beginning,¹⁸⁶ this we gladly gave over to the study of the divine teachings.

117.¹⁸⁷ {23} While we were living in this way, Evagrius, that teacher on the path of excellence, did not cease bringing many people to a love of the divine philosophy and the monastic way of life, as he called to mind the asceticism of those who practised this philosophy in the Orient. As for me, I was writing about the exploits of certain men who were clothed in God – Peter who was from Iberia, and the great Egyptian ascetic Isaiah.¹⁸⁸ these two men who were living in Palestine were acquiring great renown then among all the Christians. The Anastos from Edessa, whom I mentioned earlier,¹⁸⁹ had previously had an astonishing experience as a result of these kinds of narratives which deserves to be recounted. He saw in a dream the mighty Peter, the bishop of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had been held worthy of the name of the head of the apostles: Peter was bidding him to come

¹⁸⁶ See 67.

¹⁸⁷ Schwartz 1912, 24, gives a Greek retroversion of the first half of this section, following the practice of a number of scholars of the time (occasionally leading the unwary to suppose that their retroversions were genuine survivals from antiquity).

¹⁸⁸ While only a short fragment of Zacharias' *Life of Peter* survives (ed. Brooks 1907, 16–17), the *Life of Isaiah* is preserved in full (ed. Brooks 1907, 1–16).

¹⁸⁹ In 71 (Anastasios); this statement makes it clear that Anastos is just a shorter form of the name, and that this is the same person as Anastasios.

immediately, riding on a post-horse. When he got up, he informed me of the vision and the instruction, adding also a description of his sacred face. Weighing up [84] what he told me, (I concluded) it was not a dream that he had seen, but a divine revelation which was calling the admirable Anastos to the monastic life by means of that holy man. I told him, 'You have truly seen the great man, and you should swiftly pay heed: this is what the revelation is indicating to you.'

118. Because he had an uncle who was governing the province at that time, he said, 'I am afraid of travelling by land: I would particularly like a north wind so that I could go to Palestine by sea.' He waited a few days for this purpose, but his wish did not materialize, and he was discouraged. I reminded him of the vision that he had seen, how it wanted him rather to dash by land to the much-praised bishop and servant of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Because he was afraid of passing by his uncle when he left Berytos, I advised him not to travel past Tyre, where his uncle was residing, during day time, but that he should take his rest outside the town, and cross through Tyre (to the harbour) by night. He accepted this advice and put it into practice. Thus he reached Caesarea of Palestine. God, who had summoned Anastos to come to him by means of that holy man, then brought it about that he should run into some disciples of the great Peter, [85] from whom he would learn where the person, whom he had set off to go to, was living. The reply he heard when he spoke with them was, 'Why did you delay until now, when you were told to come swiftly?' When he subsequently came to Peter, he experienced the virtues of that godlike man and the stories about his reputation. Once he had promised to God a life of monasticism, and had come under obedience to Peter, he was immediately freed in his body from the leprosy which is known as 'the sacred disease',¹⁹⁰ for this had previously begun to take its hold over him.

119.¹⁹¹ When this became known to the admirable Elisha in Berytos, it effected in him the same zeal to come. Now the God-loving Evagrius had frequently brought up the subject with us of the monastic life, since he was expecting to captivate all, or most of us. Being direct in his manner, the great Elisha did not make any delay, like the other man (Anastos). For a long time previously he had been held worthy of a revelation of a holy man who was

190 In Classical writers 'the sacred disease' refers to epilepsy, but for leprosy or elephantiasis (also a possible translation of the Syriac term here), see Lampe, s.v., §2.

191 Schwartz 1912, 24–25, gives a Greek retroversion of this section.

bidding him in the night, 'Get up and recite Psalm 50¹⁹² to God.' Finally, as a result of abundant love (for God), the fire of divine philosophy was kindled in him – as he disclosed to me, since I was living with him then. As a result, not being able to bear the flame of the divine calling, he dashed off to [86] Palestine to that holy man, and came under his obedience, as he took up the yoke of philosophy.

120. {24} After a short time the news of the renowned Peter's departure to God reached us. On hearing it, the admirable Evagrius was filled with grief and sorrow because, unlike the others, he had not been held worthy to see that great man and to experience the divine grace with which he was endowed. He also reproached me for my slowness over such an urgent matter; likewise he reproached the others for their delay.

121.¹⁹³ However, we learnt that the great Peter had left some successors to follow him, one of them being John, known as the Canopite,¹⁹⁴ a philosopher and virgin in both body and soul – and indeed in all his bodily senses, having a mind that was concentrated on God. There were others too, Zacharias and Andreas, also Theodoros. Although mentioned here in the fourth place, at the choice of the other two who had a prior claim it seemed right that Theodoros should exercise the leadership over the monastery,¹⁹⁵ along with the great John,¹⁹⁶ while John, surnamed Rufus,¹⁹⁷ was to be singled out for (serving at) the altar. He had previously studied law at Berytos together with Theodoros, just mentioned. The two of them had both left a great [87] reputation among everyone for soberness and piety: because of the gravity of his appearance and his bodily asceticism John was nick-named 'Lazarus', and Theodoros 'the Just', because of the virtues he possessed.¹⁹⁸

192 In the Septuagint numbering (Ps. 51 of the Hebrew and English translations).

193 Schwartz 1912, 8, gives a Greek retroversion of sections **121–22**.

194 In the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, 132 = #176, the epithet 'the Canopite' is explained: 'because he was from the village of Canopis, situated some two miles south of Gaza' (thus 'the Canopite' here has nothing to do with the Egyptian Canopus). Peter 'the Canopite' was the recipient of a letter from Severos (*Sixth Book of Select Letters*, IV.7).

195 In the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, 134 = §178, he is specified as 'Theodore of Ashkelon *apocholastikōn*'; thus he may be the person mentioned in Ps.Zacharias HE VII.10 ('Theodore the *Apodikanikōn*'): for the uncertainty, see Greatrex 2011, 268, n. 181.

196 That is, the John first mentioned in **110** as the person who instructed Severos before his baptism.

197 Author of the *Plerophoriae*, CPG 7507; on him see especially Perrone 1989; Horn 2006, 12–44; and Steppa 2002.

198 For John and Theodore, see also Anon., VSev. 27, 41 (where John applies the nickname 'Lazarus' to Theodore, rather than to John the Canopite).

122. John,¹⁹⁹ who was someone involved in education, had been selected for the clergy of Antioch the great by Petros, its bishop. He received ordination to the priesthood, and lived with the man who had ordained him, because of the excellent testimonial he had from everyone. Subsequently he went to Palestine, choosing a monastic life with the great Petros. Earlier than him, Theodoros had fallen in love with the same mode of life, and had sold the entire property that belonged to him in Ascalon, from where he originated, and gave the proceeds to the poor, just as the divine law bids, and he took up the cross of Christ and followed him, as the Gospel says.

123. {25} Once the news had arrived and we heard that the renowned Peter had left behind as successors such men as these, Evagrius, Severos' spiritual father, was persistent (in telling) us all that delaying any longer from living [88] with them would be to risk losing one's soul. This led Anatolios to abandon his wife and children that he had in Alexandria, and to promise Evagrius that he would leave the world behind. Likewise Philippos from Patara, and Leukios my fellow countryman who had shortly before received a letter from the great Peter while he was still in this bodily life, exhorting us concerning the observance of God's laws. From that moment, imitating the zeal of Anastos and Elisha, I wanted to promise to become their companion, and so, because I was shrinking from the monastic life, the three of them were insistent with me concerning the lofty character of the divine philosophy, and were urging me not to part from them. I adduced being afraid of my father, because the monastery of the great Peter was not far from his house: I was telling them that I would certainly be dissuaded by my parents from any wish for a life-style of that sort. I said they should forgive me if something of this sort should occur. 'Either you belong with us', they replied, 'and cultivate philosophy²⁰⁰ together with us, or you will (at least) accompany us as far as the monastery.' Accordingly I joined them, even though the great Severos did not approve of my hasty departure:²⁰¹ for one thing, he foresaw what would happen, for another, he was upset at all of us leaving. [89] He was also aware that I was far too weak for this sort of thing. But I will not spend longer on the subject, since I do not want to write about my own affairs, even though I am accusing myself by what

199 Evidently John the Canopite is meant. The bishop who ordained him will be Peter the Fuller (485–489).

200 A clear example of the linking of 'philosophy' with the monastic life; see Malingrey 1961, 272, and above, note to 4.

201 Syriac 'haste', which will reflect Greek *hormē*, which here, however, probably has the sense of 'departure'.

I am saying: whereas they had the ability to reach the lofty height of the divine philosophy, as for me, I underwent having 'my wings fall off', as the saying goes, partly because of my own weakness, and partly for the reasons just mentioned. So I returned back to Berytos – and the renowned Peter's prophecy concerning me was fulfilled. For when, at the very beginning, I saw him, having recently returned home from Alexandria, I had with me Plousianos the Alexandrian, who is now a God-loving monk, but at that time he was part of the entourage of the Prefect of Egypt, and had come to Peter (to get his) prayer [and blessing]. Peter, having taken a good look at him, and having foretold his name, said to Plousianos, 'Go and tonsure your hair',²⁰² whereas to me he said, while I was eating with his disciples during the meal time, 'Eat up, young man.' As a consequence, not long afterwards Plousianos opted for the monastic way of life, in which he has distinguished himself up to the present day, in the monastery known as 'the Eighteenth (Milestone)'.²⁰³ I, however, took up the profession of advocate (*dikanikē*): in very deed I was seen to be (just) a 'young man', and one plunged into a multitude of sins. [90]

124. So I returned to Berytos, bringing a letter from Evagrius, so fervent in piety, to his spiritual son, (Severos), and another from Aineas,²⁰⁴ the great Christian teacher and sophist of the town of Gaza, addressed to the entourage of my compatriot Zenodoros. In them was a defence for my return, pardoning my turning down (the monastic life). The three of us, along with our companions, resumed our normal studies, reading law together, while at the same time we were to be found, at the times of the evening services and gatherings, in the holy churches, with others too. The great Severos and I had, from the beginning, agreed between ourselves to devote regular times at home to the reading of Christian literature. Severos made such progress in acquiring virtue that even before taking the monastic habit, he was seen to be a Christian philosopher in both his activities and in his understanding.

202 Though the origin of the practice of monastic tonsure is said to go back to Pachomius, references to tonsure elsewhere belong to the late fifth and to the sixth centuries; in the Church of the East its origin is attributed to the monastic reformer, Abraham of Kashkar (first half of sixth century): its form was deliberately different from that of the Syrian Orthodox. Cf. Jullien 2008, 119–24.

203 On the road going west from Alexandria, The monastery is attested in texts from the mid-fifth to the beginning of the seventh centuries; on it see van Cauwenbergh 1914, 77–78, and Gascou 1991, VI, 1826–27.

204 Author of a dialogue entitled *Theophrastos* (PG 85, 871–1004; and ed. Colonna) and 25 letters (the letter mentioned here is not among them). He is mentioned again by Zacharias in his *Life of Isaias* (p. 12) and *Dialogue with Ammonios*. PLRE II, 17 ('Aeneas 3'); and DPhA I, 82–87.

On the active side, he was imitating his (spiritual) father: as a result of his exalted asceticism he gave the appearance of having just a shadow, as it were, of a body, having vanquished it through contemplation of knowledge of the natural world, and that of *theologia*.²⁰⁵

125. I will pass over in silence the intervening struggles against the pagans and sorcerers, and what [91] I would have been going to suffer from them if our God and our Lord Jesus Christ, the author of the contest,²⁰⁶ had not delivered me in various ways from their murderous hands. The great Evagrius and his circle, along with the admirable Severos, supplicated God on our behalf in their prayers. Severos also secretly assisted me with his counsels. So how can anyone in his right mind write against Severos in the way that you say that the son of falsehood wrote?²⁰⁷ Either anyone who is a Christian is not disposed at all (to accept) words such as these, or, if he has been disposed to accept them, does he not fear the judgement of God who said ‘Do not accept an empty report’? But because of this it is necessary that (Severos) should be shown not to be inferior to his (spiritual) father, even in a small way.

126. Severos studied the law to the utmost, and all the imperial edicts right up to his own times he examined in detail, comparing their brief commentaries, and noting down in books excerpts,²⁰⁸ helpful (in cases of) forgetting for recollection, leaving for those who come after him annotations and comments, like memoranda.

127. {26} Once he had decided to go back to his country, hoping for openings in rhetoric, and for a career [92] as an advocate (*scholastikos*), he told me to go with him to pray at the shrine of the all-praised martyr Leontios, where

205 The reference is probably to the Evagrian *phusikē* and *theologikē* (*theōria*); cf. note to **138**.

206 For the same term (representing Greek *agōnothetēs*) used of God, see Anon., *VSev.* 21; for other examples see Lampe, s.v., §1.

207 Again, a reference to the author of the pamphlet (cf. **87**, **73**, and **103**).

208 The translation suggests that ‘*qr*’ should be vocalized as ‘*qare*’ ‘extractions, excerpts’, rather than ‘*eqare*’ ‘roots’, as Kugener does; Schwartz 1913, 108, in his retroversion into Greek (*tēs lēthēs pharmaka*), supposes a reminiscence of a fragment from Euripides’ lost play, *Palamedes*, ‘remedies for forgetfulness’ (Fragment 578, in ed. Jouan and van Looy, *Euripide*, VIII.2, *Fragments* [Paris, 2000], 509: *ta tēs ge lēthēs pharmak’ orthōsas monos...*, [I, Palamedes,] having by myself established a cure for forgetfulness [by teaching writing to humanity...]); likewise Poggi 1986, 64–65. In any case, whichever interpretation is correct, the following ‘and recollection’ is awkward and may represent a gloss (a suggestion I owe to Mary Whitby). Needless to say, these do not survive. For a discussion of what is implied by this section, see Collinet 1925, 251.

he had been held worthy to receive saving baptism. Once we had gone there, he got me to go with him to Homs (Emesa), for the purpose of praying (at the shrine of) the divine and holy head of St John the Baptist and Forerunner which had been found in that city.²⁰⁹ We achieved our purpose, and once we had conversed with a number of people who were firmly attached to the divine philosophy at that time, we returned to Berytos.

128. Once he had bought togas (*chlanidia*) for the profession of advocate (*dikanikē*), Severos decided to go first to Jerusalem, to venerate the Cross, the Tomb and the (church of) the Resurrection of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.²¹⁰ From there, he would go to greet Evagrius and his companions, and then return to his country. He was unaware that in fact he was being guided by divine Grace to philosophy itself.

129. When he set out from Berytos, hoping to return there, he had entrusted me with his belongings and his servants, taking with him only one,²¹¹ from among those who were oldest. Once he had reached the holy city he venerated the saving signs of the sufferings of God. Subsequently, however, once he had met the admirable [93] Evagrius and his companions, together with the successors of the great Peter, and seen the disposition of their life, he was captivated with a love for the divine philosophy, and he manifested a change worthy of astonishment: instead of a toga, he put on the monastic habit; instead of law books, he was occupied with divine matters, exchanging the toils of the legal profession for the sweat of the monastic and philosophical calling. Little by little divine Grace proclaimed him as a spokesman (*rhētor*) for (the Christian) religion, anointing him for the leadership of the priesthood of the great city of Antioch.

130. Having reached this point (in my narrative), I have in mind to describe briefly the entire way of life of the monastery which the godly Peter (the Iberian) established. They spent all their days engaged in fasts, taking their sleep on the ground, standing all day long, keeping vigil for practically the whole night, with continuous prayers and offices. A small portion of the day they set aside for manual work, from the proceeds of which they provided for the body's requirements and the relief of those in need. Even during the

209 An account of the discovery of the head of John the Baptist in Emesa is given by Marcellinus (PL 51, col. 928–29), *sub anno* 453, and very briefly in the Paschal Chronicle (according to Whitby and Whitby 1989, 82, n. 270, the year was in fact probably 452).

210 The visit to Jerusalem also features in Anon., *VSev.* 18.

211 His old tutor, see **131**.

period of physical toil each one of them would practice meditation on some divine words (of Scripture). Such [94] modesty did they possess that they hardly looked at one another in the face; instead, keeping their eyes on the ground, they would give an answer to one another (on matters) concerning their common way of life. They would carry out with reverence everything that concerned the practice of virtue. Not a single superfluous word did they ever utter. I know of some among them who took on, from the great Peter himself while he was still alive, an obligation of complete silence towards everyone for ten years or more, talking only to God in their prayers and offices. Because of the surge of thoughts that frequently occur, coming from the demons, they were instructed by (Peter) who had imposed the obligation on them, to reveal the battle with them to him alone, so that they might receive the appropriate remedy. They observed this to such an extent that not a single empty word left their lips; nor did they express, through outward gesture or glance of the eyes, any inappropriate thought; nor were they distracted at all.

131. It was of this most chaste philosophical (life) that the great Severos became enamoured. (Wanting) to take on this sort of yoke, he sent to me for this purpose the tutor who had brought him up from childhood, who happened to be accompanying him, informing me by letter what had proved pleasing to God [95] in his case, and he instructed me to send to his earthly homeland his servants,²¹² along with all the things that he had entrusted to me – which I did.

132. Subsequently the admirable Stephanos,²¹³ who was one of those who came to Berytos after us, also burned with zeal for this mode of life. When he learnt from me, while I was still living in that city, of the departure thence of those six men who had left to go and take up the monastic habit in the monastery of the illustrious Peter, he too went off, making himself the seventh, having only spent a short while in the city.

133. Once I had finished my studies of the law, I returned home. I had seen that godly band, and kept them in (my mind's) eye, but I was unable to imitate them, being held back by feebleness of soul. Because of a problem that occurred for my father, I was compelled to come to this imperial city and practise the legal profession.

212 Similarly Anon., *VSev.* 24.

213 Probably Stephanos the Palestinian, mentioned in **71**, is intended.

134. As for Evagrius, who was the source of benefit for all those who undertook to imitate him, after having progressed in the monastery in the divine philosophy, enduring sweat and labour for the sake of virtue, being seen by everyone as a perfect monk, [96] he shortly afterwards left this earth and set off on a swift course to our Lord Jesus Christ whom he so loved, to heaven, to the place where the souls of those who have lived such a life are at rest. Thus the prophecy that he had made concerning himself found fulfilment: 'If it should happen that I take up the monastic habit, I will die in the very same monastery where I am found worthy of the holy habit.'

135. {27} After having spent a certain time practising the divine philosophy in the monastery just mentioned, the admirable Severos was fired with a desire for deserted places and the way of life of solitaries that the great Antony – or someone else of similar virtue – had brought to light: leaving that communal life and existence, he went to the wilderness of Eleutheropoli.²¹⁴ He had with him Anastos, who was from Edessa, who shared with him the same eagerness, being aroused by a similar enthusiasm. Such was the harsh way of life, with the arduous labours of an exalted asceticism, that their bodies were reduced to a gravely sick state, and they would necessarily have departed from human life as a result of such asceticism, had not God – who accepts this sort of eagerness – stirred the Superior of the monastery built by the famous Romanos²¹⁵ to pay them a visit and take them back to his monastery. [97] In this way he took the necessary care of them and persuaded them both to live with them for the moment.

136. The way of life of these men was harsher than that of all the monasteries of Palestine that were noted for asceticism. It was embraced all the more by the admirable Severos because of (its) great austerity. As a result, after he had recovered from his sick state, his feet became swollen in the way mentioned.²¹⁶

214 Cf Anon., *VSev.* 35; Beth Gubrin, to the south-west of Jerusalem, about half-way between Jerusalem and Gaza.

215 Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 36. For Romanos, known as 'Father of the monks', see John Rufus, *Pterophoriae* 25, *On Theodosios* 8–11 (ed. Horn and Phenix, 295–301); *Life of Peter the Iberian* 77; and Ps.Zacharias, *HE* III.3. He had previously founded a monastery near Tekoa, and the present one (evidently in the vicinity of Eleutheropolis) was a later foundation, deliberately outside the jurisdiction of Juvenal, patriarch of Jerusalem, and probably on land belonging to Eudocia; cf. Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky 2006, 34, n. 160.

216 No earlier mention is to be found; possibly the Syriac *ba-zna* is a mistranslation of *kathōs* (*legetai*) 'as it is said' (which should require 'a(y)k zna).

137. After having lived for a certain time in the monastery referred to, he decided to return to the region of Gaza, by the sea. There, in the Lavra of Maiuma – where the monastery of the great Peter was also located – he lived a solitary life in a quiet cell. When he had excelled in the life of stillness for a considerable time in these two monasteries, because of the words of grace that he possessed, some people asked to live in obedience to him, taking the monastic habit. Consequently, in order to purchase and set up a monastery, building cells suitable for receiving others, he was obliged to devote what was left over from the proceeds of the property of his parents²¹⁷ that he had divided up with his brothers, and most of which he had (already) distributed to the poor. [98]

138. Once this became known to the Petros who came from Palestinian Caesarea,²¹⁸ he came to him. This Petros, after an education in the encyclical subjects – I mean grammar and rhetoric which he had studied in Berytos – had turned his back on the city and the legal curriculum as having empty prospects, and gave himself over to those who had taken up the divine philosophy in the monastery of the renowned Romanos. (Petros) had already had experience of (Severos') modesty, wisdom, his abstinence and acquisition of every virtue and grace that had been accorded to him in the matter of natural *theōria* and of *theologia*²¹⁹ that follows on from this. This was from the time when the Superior of the monastery of the great Romanos had brought (Severos) there, as I mentioned above,²²⁰ because of the bodily sickness that had befallen him. Accordingly (Petros) requested (Severos) to accept him as a companion in (the life of) divine philosophy, putting him in the status of a disciple. Severos spoke of him to certain prominent people who had grown old in the ascetic life, who over a long period had gained great experience and discernment, and had already been held worthy of (living in) a spiritual state; one of these was the great and renowned Elia. On truly hearing from (Elia) that he should not turn back [99] a spiritual brother who had taken refuge in him, and who was engaged in the very same combat and struggle – and in particular because (Petros) had come to him out of a love for wisdom and for the sake of spiritual charisms – accordingly (Severos) accepted this disciple out of obedience to the holy fathers, just as

217 Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 37, for the sale of his parents' property (*ousia*).

218 Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 39.

219 The terminology reflects that of Evagrius of Pontos (see above, notes to **73** and **124**). 'Natural *theōria*' concerns contemplation of the natural world.

220 In **135**.

the divine apostle Paul (accepted) the great Timothy, and before him, Elijah the Tishbite – who reached heaven because of the virtues he had acquired – (had accepted) Elisha.²²¹ Or, if you prefer, just as the godly Pamphilos, the martyr of our Lord Jesus Christ, (had accepted) Eusebius of Caesarea,²²² or the greatly praised Basil (had accepted) the godly Gregory during the time he was dwelling in Pontus.²²³

139. Others too, who had been raised up to a similar enthusiasm, came to the great Severos and, living in obedience to him, they manifested similar fruits of the (life of) philosophy, with the result that everyone gave praise to God for their progress and advance in virtue. In the case of the disciple Petros, when his (spiritual) father allowed him to apply himself to contemplation, the step to which is *praxis*, as Gregory the Theologian termed it,²²⁴ he would fix his mind continually on the holy Scriptures, meditating on the divine words and the interpretation that, through the divine Spirit, often came to his mind with two or three (meanings). In this way he gathered a wealth [100] of (spiritual) knowledge and an abundance of scriptural examples. He was admired by everyone, not just for his abstinence of life, modesty and other virtues, but also for the compassion he showed to those in need – something with which God is especially pleased; likewise, too, (he was admired) for his care and concern towards strangers who passed by.

140. All these things moved all the saints to select for ordination to the priesthood, not only the great Severos, but subsequently also the admirable Petros. Both of them received this from the hands of the confessor Epiphanius²²⁵ who had, prior to them, ordained John and Theodoros,²²⁶ the heirs of the greatly famed bishop Peter (the Iberian), and spiritual fathers of the great Severos.

221 1 Kgs 19:16–21; 2 Kgs 2:11.

222 Pamphilos, martyred in 310, was greatly revered by Eusebius.

223 The reference will be to Gregory of Nazianzus, rather than to Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa; the invitation to Gregory is to be found in two letters of Basil (nos. 2 and 14). See further Rousseau 1994, 65–67.

224 Gregory uses this phrase, *praxis theōrias epibasis*, on at least two occasions: *Discourse* 4, 113 (PG 35, 649B–651A); and 20, 12 (PG 35, 1080B); it is probably also reflected in **73**, above. On the phrase, see Spidlik 1976.

225 Epiphanius, bishop of Magydos (Mygdalon in Ps. Zacharias, *HE* V.5, Greatrex 2011, 189 with n. 85); of Pamphylian origin, he had left his see after the annulment of Basiliscus' *Enkyklion*, and had ended up in Palestine; Honigmann 1951, 132–33.

226 For John, see **110**; and for Theodoros (the abbot who succeeded Peter the Iberian), see **121**.

141. {28} While these men were living in this way and all the fathers in Egypt and Palestine felt pride in their virtues, all of a sudden envy was aroused against everyone in Palestine who was in communion with the fathers in Egypt and Alexandria. A certain Alexandrian monk, Nephaios,²²⁷ who had completely forgotten the practice of virtue, [101] sharpened his tongue and, adopting a sophistic procedure, set himself up against all those who had grown old in ascetic labours. He stirred up the local people over the matter of the union of Petros, bishop of Alexandria, with Akakios, bishop of this imperial city,²²⁸ and – he claimed – out of zeal against the synod that had gathered in Chalcedon. In his own locality he was the cause of ten thousand riots and killings, out of hostility towards Petros who was much loved by virtually all the citizens, but especially by those who constitute the factions.²²⁹ As a result, on many occasions he stirred up Zenon, who made a pious end, against (Petros), saying that he had driven out of their monastery some people who had separated themselves from communion with him because of his union with Akakios. Furthermore, he incited 30,000 monks of Egypt and was making ready to enter Alexandria with the intention of overthrowing that union, when Kosmas,²³⁰ the Emperor's eunuch, was sent to assist those who were said to have been driven out.

142. Once Petros had departed from this life (Nephaios) pretended that he had changed and that he repented of the many times he had stirred up matters against (Petros) because of his union with Akakios; his concern was to appear as orthodox, on the basis of what was in the synodical letter that (Petros) [102] had sent to Fravittas,²³¹ the successor of Akakios. Then, wishing to receive ordination to the priesthood in Alexandria, and to be

227 Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 40. Having started out as an opponent of Chalcedon, Nephaios changed his allegiance and became an ardent defender of the Council's christology. Severos wrote two discourses against him which survive in part (ed. Lebon, *CSCO Scr. Syri* 119–20). Ps. Zacharias *HE* VI.1 described him as an 'agitator' (Greatrex 2011, 213, with n. 23). On Nephaios, see especially Moeller 1944/5; Gray 1979, 105–11; and *CCT* II.2, 23–24, 47–52.

228 Patriarch of Constantinople 472–89.

229 A note in the margin specifies 'The Blues and the Greens'. For the Factions, see especially Cameron 1976, 137–38 (on this passage); Roueché 1993, 145–56; and for Beirut in particular, MacAdam 2001/2.

230 He was *Praepositus sacri cubiculi*, and was mentioned again by Zacharias in his *Life of Isaias*, p. 14. In Ps. Zacharias *HE* VI.2 he is called a *spatharios* (Greatrex 2011, 213, with n. 24); he returned from Egypt in 487. *PLRE* II 326–27 ('Cosmas 3').

231 Patriarch of Constantinople from December 489 to March 490. The letter (*CPG* 5496) is preserved in Ps. Zacharias *HE* VI.6 (Greatrex 2011, 221–23).

entrusted with the economy of the church, he got many people in the palace (*palation*)²³² to press his case in a letter to Athanasios²³³ who received the episcopal office after Petros. The populace, however, who had good will towards Petros, and a favourable memory of him, rightly hated Nephalius as being the cause of countless disturbances: they were shouting out that he was someone possessed, who needed to be put in chains, and they gave testimony that there was no possibility that the man's audacity should succeed.

143. In the end Nephalius brazenly turned round and accepted the Synod which previously he had condemned and he joined the clergy of Jerusalem, having changed that zeal, as a result of which he had been the cause of many disturbances, making frequent journeys to the emperor and then coming back, upsetting the union of the churches and ruining the peace and well-being of his country.

144. Later, as a demonstration of his change of heart, he made ready to cause harm to the heirs of the great Petros, and to those who shared their views, along with all [103] those whom he had previously admired; this was when he came to the district of the city of Gaza that is by the sea, where these men's monasteries were located. Recognizing that the God-loving Severos was invincible in religious teaching, turning away from all heresies equally, but especially those of Apollinarius,²³⁴ Nestorius²³⁵ and Eutyches²³⁶

232 Evidently this refers to the governor's residence, and not that of the bishop, for which *episkopeion* was the normal term: thus *ACO* II.1 (Chalcedon), *Actio* XI.28, for Beirut (though 'palace' in the English translation, II, 277); Anon., *VSev.* 58, for Antioch; and the *Life of John the Almoner*, ed. Gelzer, 172, for Alexandria; *palation* is otherwise only attested for it at a later date (much later, 1020, in the West, according to Miller 2000, 89–90, 268–69). The location of the governor's residence, and its relationship geographically to the 'former palace', is unknown; cf. McKenzie 2007a, 67–68.

233 Patriarch of Alexandria 489–96.

234 His views on christology (denying the presence of a human soul in the incarnate Christ) were condemned at the Council of Constantinople of 381.

235 Bishop of Constantinople, deposed at the Council of Ephesus in 431; he was seen by later Chalcedonian and Miaphysite writers as holding that the Son of God and the son of Mary were distinct. By contrast, the Church of the East, in the Persian Empire, saw him as an upholder of a Dyophysite christology who was unfairly deposed in 431.

236 Archimandrite of a monastery in Constantinople; accused of heretical views on christology in 448, he was rehabilitated a year later, but condemned again at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. He appears to have held that the incarnate Christ was consubstantial only with the Father and not with human beings – a view that undermined the effectiveness of the incarnation and was condemned both by Chalcedonians and by Miaphysites.

who fought against God, he decided to concentrate his combat against him. Being unable to endure Severos' invincible tongue or the profundity of his thoughts and purity of his teaching, he made a discourse in the presence of the church against him and against the other monks whose advocate he had been before the emperor. In this discourse he divided the two natures in our one Lord Jesus Christ, and in the end he drove them from the monasteries, with the help of the churches, using people who had always been peaceably disposed towards them, and who had thought the difference between them was (just) a fraternal quarrel, so that up to this point they had called them 'orthodox' – that is, until the incitement against them just mentioned took place in the manner I have described.

145. This was the reason why Severos, that lover of the divine philosophy and of the life of tranquillity, [104] came to the capital.²³⁷ When the Christ-loving emperor learnt what had happened, having been informed by the governor of the region, and being aware of Nephaios' earlier disruptiveness, as well as of the virtues of those who were being persecuted by him, he resisted him with just anger. As a result everyone knew the emperor's God-loving will, and those who had been expelled from their monasteries sent the great Severos as a representative, in view of the wrong that had been done to them.

146. On arrival he sought me out, and likewise John,²³⁸ the toiler for our Lord Jesus Christ. Once he had learnt from us concerning those who had a true concern for orthodoxy, he entered the emperor's presence with the help of Klementinos,²³⁹ who at that time had the honour of consular and patrician rank, along with that of Eupraxios²⁴⁰ of glorious and pious memory who was one of the eunuchs of the imperial chambers. He related in detail all the actions that had been taken against them, and how they could not be reproached for a single heresy, but were in complete agreement with the fathers in Egypt; and how they had been driven out of their monasteries where they had lived in tranquillity. He moved the emperor and those [105] in authority to pity when, together with the monks who were with him, he

237 This was in 508; he remained there until 511. Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 41–42.

238 The identity of this John is unclear.

239 An ivory diptych celebrating his consulship (in 513) survives. He also receives mention in Ps. Zacharias *HE* VII.10 (Greatrex 2011, 257) in connection with the case against Patriarch Makedonios of Constantinople; *PLRE* II, 303.

240 Like Kosmas he was a *cubicularius*. Zacharias addressed his Ecclesiastical History to him, and he was the recipient of several letters from Severos (nos. 65, 67, 68, in PO 14). Cf. *PLRE* II, 426.

told them of all that had happened. He won their admiration for his wise and spiritual manner, with the result that the emperor at once gave orders that the *magistros* of the time²⁴¹ should ensure by all means that the monasteries of those who had been wronged should be speedily returned to them. He wrote a doctrinal letter to those in charge of these monasteries, stating that our Lord Jesus Christ was 'from two natures'. In this letter he urged them to look to the union of the holy catholic Church of God.

147. Aggravated by this, the opponents pretended that the admirable Severos and his associates had previously been involved in the heresy of the wicked Eutyches. In refutation of this calumny Severos composed a discourse addressed to Apion and Paulos,²⁴² of illustrious memory, who were patricians. He addressed it to them (writing) against the heresy of Eutyches, at the same time sending to other persons many similar letters, against Eutyches, Apollinarius and Nestorius. He learnt that some followers of Nestorius had torn apart the divinely inspired writings of Cyril, the great archbishop of Alexandria, their aim being to show, by means of quotations that were extracted forcibly and completely out of context, that Cyril had the same views as the wicked Nestorius.²⁴³ Once the book had come into his hands he refuted it as a deception that had been concocted, aimed at the simple-minded. He exposed the audacious calumny against the divine Cyril, doing this by pointing out what came before and what followed the extracts. This was the reason he called the treatise the 'Philaethes'.

148. I pass over in silence the writings he composed addressed to a large number of people in the imperial court, in particular, to Eupraxios, already mentioned²⁴⁴ as being one of the imperial eunuchs. This man, who had a love for learning and for Christ, had asked him about certain points of

241 This will have been Celer, the *magister officiorum*, or official in charge of the civil service, from 513 to 518; on him see *PLRE* II, 275–77 ('Celer 2'). In Anon., *VSev.* 45 his name is given.

242 Also mentioned by Anon., *VSev.* 43; The work does not survive. Apion is mentioned in Ps. Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle* 54, as staying in Edessa (in 503) while he saw to the supplies for the army during the war with Persia. *PLRE* II, 111–12 ('Apion 2').

243 Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 44. The reference is to the Chalcedonian *Florilegium Cyrillianum* compiled, probably in Alexandria (c.482), with the intention of showing that Cyril of Alexandria's writings supported the Dyophysite Council of Chalcedon (Zacharias regarded all Dyophysites as 'Nestorians'). Both the *Florilegium* and Severos' response to it, the *Philaethes*, survive, ed. Hespel 1955, and Hespel [in *CSCO* Scr. Syri 133–4,] 1952. See especially *CCT* II.2, 22–23, 28–46.

244 In **146**.

church teachings, and about issues that seemed very much subject to doubt. I will not mention either how he refuted the Testament of Lampetios,²⁴⁵ to which the heresy of the Adelphians²⁴⁶ gave birth; (nor) how, when he came to Nikomedia, he exposed Isidoros,²⁴⁷ that is John, who abandoned the monastic habit and went astray, falling into the error of the opinions of Origen, causing many others to go astray; [107] (nor) how he <assisted(?)>²⁴⁸ those from the circle of the great Theodoros, one of the heirs of the renowned Peter of Iberian stock, when they came for the same reason to the imperial city, namely on account of the union which was of concern to them. Having begun on this, he <helped(?)> Sergios the holy bishop of Philadelphia of the Solymoi,²⁴⁹ and Asterios of Kelenderis.²⁵⁰ He spoke together with the latter, since it happened that they too were coming there.²⁵¹ Likewise <in the case of> Mamas who was abbot of the monastery of the holy Romanos,²⁵² and Eunomios the venerable abbot of (the monastery) of the blessed Akakios.²⁵³ He brought about union with all the Isaurian bishops at the hands of these men, (thus) by these very actions putting to shame those who claimed that they were shunning communion with every bishop of the holy catholic Church of God, and for that reason they falsely gave them the nickname of

245 'A man infected with the heresy of Adelphios' (for whom see next note), according to Severos (*Sixth Book of Select Letters*, I.13, tr. p. 55). He is also mentioned in Severos' Homily 108. Severos' refutation of his *Diathekē*, which will date from between 508 and 511, is also mentioned by Photios, *Bibliothēkē*, codex 52; Honigmann 1951, 82, 118. For Severos' polemic against the Messalians, see Alpi 2009, I, 281–83. 'Lampetians in Roman territory' feature in a set of Questions and Answers, perhaps from the 520s, in the West Syriac *Synodicon* (ed. Vööbus, I, 176, tr. 168), where it emerges that they were an ascetic group in which men and women lived together.

246 Adelphios of Edessa was tried and condemned for his Messalian ideas at a synod in Side (Pamphylia) in 383, and again by Flavian I of Antioch in the late fourth century (Theodoret, *HE* IV.11.4); Philoxenos, *Letter to Patricius* 108–09 (PO 30, 850–53) calls him 'the inventor of the heresy of the Messalians'.

247 Only known from here, it seems (Honigmann 1951, 138), though possibly he might be the Isidoros against whom Severos polemicizes in a letter (*Sixth Book of Select Letters*, VI.1, tr. p. 360); on chronological grounds he cannot be the Isidoros who was leader of the 'Protoktists' in the Origenist debates of the mid-sixth century.

248 The syntax is very awkward and a verb must have fallen out.

249 Solymoi is another name for the Isaurians, and SWLWM is not a corruption of SLWQ as has sometimes been thought (thus Kugener in his translation; similarly Fedalto 1988, II, 871); for the correct interpretation, see Honigmann 1951, 93–94.

250 Another bishopric of Isauria: see Honigmann 1951, 92; Fedalto 1988, II, 864.

251 That is, Constantinople.

252 For the monastery of Romanos, see 135.

253 Otherwise unknown, it seems.

'Akephaloi'.²⁵⁴ (Nor will I tell) how, when those monks from Antioch the Great were going (there) concerning the same matter, and were rejoicing in fearsome anathemas, proving to be obstacles to the union of the Church, (Severos) and those from Palestine, kept in sight what is possible, without modifying exact teaching or leaving any excuse for those bishops who were the unwilling [108] to gather with themselves the members of the holy catholic Church of God.

149. He raised to the heights of (good) doctrine the inferior character of the *plērophoria* of Flavian,²⁵⁵ who had become bishop of Antioch, moderating to a manageable level the harshness of those who were in doubt about him. He urged the emperor to give orders, by means of a *tupos* such as this,²⁵⁶ for the union. When Flavian of Antioch and Elia of Jerusalem²⁵⁷ were unwilling to consent to this (*tupos*), they and certain of those who opposed these measures brought a great deal of confusion on themselves and the common good.

150. What should one say? (Should one recount) how he won over to himself eloquent bishops, writing to some of them, speaking with others, with the result that they too became helpers in the struggle against the teachings of Nestorius. Leaving aside these things, I shall just say this: having spent three years here (in Constantinople) for the purpose of the union, he did not diminish in any way his monastic way of life; nor did he depart from the exactitude of the rule of ascetics, or live a life that bore no witness: such were the instructions (he received) from the great Peter the Iberian. During all that time at first he was with those monks who had come with him for this purpose; subsequently [109] he was with some holy men who had likewise come up with him from Palestine, I mean Theodoros, whom I have just mentioned,²⁵⁸ and those with him. All those who knew this man – who had been called 'the just' in Berytos – testified to him as a model of virtue and chastity. Furthermore, certain people of great counsel and age used to study with him, since he was one of those, as I have already said, who, along with

254 'The Headless ones', a name given to the rigorist monks who disapproved of Peter Mongus' acceptance of the *Henotikon* (see note on **157**) without an explicit condemnation of Chalcedon. Frend 1972, 180, 187; CCT II.1, 259–60.

255 Flavian II, patriarch of Antioch 490–98. The *plērophoria* does not survive.

256 Severos mentions this *Tupos*, or Edict, in *The Sixth Book of Select Letters*, I.1; only excerpts from it, in Armenian, survive: Moeller 1961; CCT 2:1, 275–76; Kofsky 2007, 48–50; Price 2009, I, 5.

257 Elias I, patriarch of Jerusalem 492–516. For the background, cf. Perrone 1980, 141–51.

258 In **148**.

John, were heirs of Peter, that ‘chosen vessel’,²⁵⁹ and who gave the monastic habit to the admirable Severos, anointing him for virtue and raising him to the heights of the divine philosophy.

151. After these things his disciple Petros, whom I mentioned above,²⁶⁰ arrived, reminding him about returning to his monastery. To all of us who saw him then and had experience of him, he too appeared as someone adorned with all kinds of virtue, perfected in monastic asceticism and compunction. He was also admired by those in the circle of the great Theodoros²⁶¹ for his sobriety and other virtues.

152. {29} When the affair concerning Makedonios²⁶² took place, and after the debate and discussion with him concerning doctrine that Severos held [110] in the presence of adjudicators provided by the emperor,²⁶³ certain people were moved to propose him as their choice for the archbishopric (of Constantinople). Many people were in agreement with them, with the result that the emperor himself would have been more or less of the same opinion had it not been for the jealousy and envy of certain people, which put an end to such an idea. Even so, (Severos) was urged by the emperor on many occasions to take up residence with Timotheos²⁶⁴ – who was Makedonios’ successor – a man admirable for his virtue and rich in compassion for those in need: in this way (Severos) would provide for matters concerning the unity of the Church, along with Timotheos. Severos, however, excused himself from this pressing invitation, calling to mind (his) love of tranquility and the monastic way of life and philosophy. Having attracted others to this mode of life, at this point he returned to his monastery, having fulfilled as far as it was possible the mission concerning which he had come to this imperial city: before everything else he held the monastic life in honour.

153. God, however, wanting to appoint him as archbishop of the great city of Antioch, then saw that the vote should fall on him, through the choice of all the monks of the Oriens. It had so happened that many of them had had experience in this imperial city of his faith and orthodox teaching, as well as

259 Acts 9:15.

260 In **138**.

261 The successor of Peter the Iberian (see **140**).

262 Patriarch of Constantinople 496–511. Events leading to his deposition in 511 are described in Ps.Zacharias, *HE* VII.7–8 (Greatrex 2011, 251–64); see especially Dijkstra and Greatrex 2009, 235–39. Anon., *VSev.* 45, has more on Makedonios.

263 Anastasius (491–518).

264 Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 47. Timothy I, 511–18.

of his way of life, as far as the (monastic) philosophy is concerned; this was because they [111] had come up (here) for the very same reasons. Besides, previous to these men, those from the monastery of Turgas²⁶⁵ (had known him): they had been chased out of one of the villages near Apameia at the orders of Flavian, because of the zeal that they showed against the teachings of Nestorius; they then turned up in Palestine, nearly a hundred of them, each carrying a cross on his shoulders, and they were received by (Severos) and by the heirs of Peter, Isaias, Romanos, Shalman and Akakios, all renowned men. (Severos) also (had the support) of all the people, who already admired him because of the good reports concerning him, both in respect of his fight for orthodoxy here (in Constantinople), and at the Synod which took place in Phoenicia,²⁶⁶ when he was subsequently seen by the orthodox bishops to have caused them to be victorious in the entire contest, he having combined with the great Theodoros in showing his concern (for orthodoxy).

154. The Christ-loving emperor²⁶⁷ approved his election to the archbishopric. Once Flavian had fallen from office as archbishop at the common decision of the bishops of the Oriens,²⁶⁸ on the grounds of innovations to the faith, (the emperor) ordered Severos to go from his monastery to Antioch and accept the archbishopric [112] in view of the agreement and unanimity of the bishops and monks, and to achieve the union with everyone which Flavian had broken by favouring Makedonios and those holding the views of Nestorius, who wanted to introduce the teachings of Diodore and Theodore²⁶⁹ into the Church.

155. Like them were the people in Persia who once again were stirring up controversies of this kind. As a result of their actions those who held to an orthodox opinion in that region sent frequent embassies to our emperor, (at the same time) urging the bishops on our side to disclose their intentions with regard to these matters. In particular, because Barsauma²⁷⁰ was not only

265 Only known from here; cf. Honigmann 1951, 55.

266 The synod was held in Tyre in 514 or 515. For confusion with an earlier synod at Antioch in 513, see de Halleux 1963, 79–85; *CCT* II.1, 284–85.

267 Anastasius; Severos' consecration took place on 16 November, 512; cf. Alpi 2009, I, 49.

268 Cf. Anon., *VSev.* 48. Frend 1972, 218–19.

269 Diodore, bishop of Tarsus (d. c.390) and Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia (d. 428), though highly regarded in their own lifetimes, became to be seen, from the 430s onwards, as the forerunners of Nestorius and his strongly Dyophysite christology.

270 Bishop of Nisibis (died shortly before 496). The 'canons' probably refer to those issued at Barsauma's synod which he convened at Beth Lapat in 484, whose acts and canons he subsequently retracted in the presence of the Catholicos Akakios in 486. It is usually assumed

said to be concerned to get them to adopt heretical teachings, but he had also corrupted the ecclesiastical canons: to please the Shah of the Persians²⁷¹ who was aggrieved at the large number of Christians who had abstained from marriage, (Barsauma) had had the audacity to lay down laws to oppose this, obliging every bishop, every cleric, and every monk, in other words, all Christians, to take a wife in marriage and to live with her.

156. It was then that Akak(ios) who was archbishop of this imperial city sent and rebuked (Barsauma) on account of the teachings of Nestorius and Theodore: the serpent was still hissing! As for Barsauma's canons, he rejected them as being in total disagreement with the apostolic tradition. [113]

157. The Christ-loving emperor wanted to get rid of these innovations of the offspring of Nestorius who were plotting against the *Henotikon*²⁷² of Zeno, of pious memory. Makedonios too had also made a beginning on a similar attempt (against it): at the time of his ordination he had promised to accept the *Henotikon* and to be in communion with all the bishops, but subsequently he had gone against its spirit and renounced union with the Egyptians. After a certain period Flavian followed the same attitude by his actions, causing upset to all the monks of the Oriens: he persecuted many there who held fast to the divine philosophy, who took delight in the labours and sweat of the ascetic life-style, and who anathematized equally the heresies of Nestorius

that the canons concerned the marriage of clergy, and this is what is objected to here; for the obscure circumstances, see Gero 1981, 38–59. Barsauma was also seen by Syrian Orthodox writers as the main person responsible for introducing 'Nestorianism' (i.e. a strict Dyophysite christology) into Persia. It was under his auspices that the School of Nisibis was (re-)founded, with the poet Narsai, formerly of the Persian School in Edessa, as its director (the statutes of the School, dated 496, survive, ed. Vööbus 1961). Cf. *GEDSH*, 58–59; and for the School of Nisibis, see especially Becker 2006 and 2008.

271 If the synod is that of 484, the Shah will probably have been Balash (Valash; 484–88); it was, however, with his predecessor, Peroz (459–early 484), that Barsauma had a good relationship, and it was no doubt Peroz whom Barsauma had originally wished to please. Celibacy was considered abhorrent by Zoroastrians.

272 Issued by the emperor in 489, the aim of the *Henotikon* (CPG 5999) was to provide a christological formula that avoided the controversial term 'nature', the stumbling block of the Chalcedonian formula. Though well intentioned, it gave rise to controversy over whether or not it implicitly condemned the formula 'in two natures' of the Council of Chalcedon. The Greek original is preserved in Evagrius *HE* III.14, and the Syriac translation in Ps.Zacharias *HE* V.8. For the controversy over the *Henotikon*, see especially *CCTC* II.1, 247–317; Gray 1979, 28–34 (and 2005 for a helpful overview); Blaudeau 2006, 188–239; and Price 2009, I, 2–7; see also Section 2 of the Introduction, above.

and of Eutyches, along with that of Apollinarius, the enemy of God, and every other wrong doctrine that has arisen in the holy catholic Church of God. In the light of all this, and not wanting to turn aside from the import of the *Henotikon*, and desiring to put a check on innovations such as these, and (to end) the persecutions, the emperor accepted the election of the great Severos, as I have mentioned above, holding him to be worthy to receive the office of archbishop, as I have just said.

158. When I learnt of this, I reminded (Severos) in a letter of the prophecy made concerning him [114] by the blessed Menas.²⁷³ I told him that it was a divine calling, and that he should not refuse it. In order to bring the prophecy concerning him to fulfilment God ensured that he accepted the archiepiscopal office. The entire city regarded him as a second Peter. So he accepted the office of archbishop, along with union with the Oriental bishops, the clerics, the monks and the people. He immediately re-established union with the Egyptians which his predecessor had broken off, to the destruction of ecclesiastical harmony. Only Epiphanius, the bishop of Tyre, out of love for Flavian – who was his brother – did not go along at all with the union, being joined in this by Julianos, (bishop) of Bostra.²⁷⁴ These two abandoned their cities without anyone forcing them to do so. That man of God (Severos) would have effected union with all the rest of the bishops, sending them synodical letters, but the envy of the demons and the zeal of certain people prevented this: these were men who took no pleasure in the peace of the Churches. There was also a disturbance that took place in this imperial city, caused by the form of the Trisagion that was current in the Oriens, with the addition 'who was crucified for us, have mercy on us'.²⁷⁵ It had pleased some

²⁷³ See **11**, above.

²⁷⁴ For these two bishops, both strong opponents of Severos, see Honigsmann 1951, 38–41, 76–77.

²⁷⁵ There are various traditions concerning the origin of the liturgical phrase 'Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us', the most plausible of which takes it back to the time of Proclus, archbishop of Constantinople (434–46). As noted in Section 2 of the Introduction, division of opinion soon arose over who was being addressed: in Constantinople it was held to be the Trinity, while in Syria all three elements were seen as being addressed to Christ, and in order to bring this out the addition 'who was crucified for us' was added by Peter the Fuller, patriarch of Antioch, in 471. The matter became a source of conflict in 511 when monks from Syria and Palestine, residing in Constantinople, sang it with the added phrase. Before long, what had started out as a geographical difference came to be seen as a doctrinal one, the short formula being seen as Chalcedonian, and the longer one as anti-Chalcedonian. See especially *CCT* II.2, 254–59, and Greatrex 2011, 254 n. 134; see also section 2 of the Introduction.

people to say this here too, but they ended up in great [115] dangers at the hands of simple people who were misled by those who held to the views of Nestorius, who were preparing a similar short liturgical text for Rome.

159. In this way attempts at union were foiled. Severos gave his first homily in the Church of God at the time when he accepted the office of archbishop.²⁷⁶ In it he made a mockery of all the heresies: everyone was amazed at the rectitude of his teachings, the biblical quotations and his openness of speech; as a result they considered him a second John (Chrysostom).

160. My friend, now I have related how the great Severos lived up to the time of his becoming archbishop. I leave the rest of the story to the city which received him, to all those who were guided by him, enjoying his apostolic teaching, who have already now had experience of his way of life and his ascetic labours. Thus I shall bring an end to the discourse I have made at your urging, to the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who is the apex, the beginning and the end of all fear of God and of every truthful narrative.

Ended is the History of the way of life of the holy Mar Severos, prior to his episcopacy, composed by Zacharias the Scholastikos.

²⁷⁶ CPG 7036, ed Kugener, *Oriens Christianus* 2 (1902): 265–82 (also in *PO* 2 (1904): 322–25); cf. also Kofsky 2007, 51–52.

ANONYMOUS LIFE OF SEVEROS, ATTRIBUTED TO JOHN OF BETH APHTONIA

[123]¹ (Superscript) Another biography of holy Mar Severos, patriarch of Antioch, which was written by John, abbot of the holy monastery of Beth Aptonia, which the pious Dometios, of the same monastery, urged him to compose, who afterward also became bishop: for him John composed this preface.²

[Introduction]

1. I praise your love of learning and your desire for virtues, O man of God, since you have no satiety with things divine, but at all times what you have received has become a desire for what is to come. You know clearly that ceasing from the good is a return to evil, and that, in contrast, a start for the good is flight from evil things. For after you were engrossed with the words of the great Severos, and gave heed to the sublimity [124] of their theology and contemplation, their orthodox dogmas, interpretation of Divine Scriptures, and their doctrinal exhortations which pour out like the sea, you longed to learn about the life of this man. You did not think that the Holy Spirit speaks things like this through an ordinary man, but rather by one who transcends human thought. But when you considered the absence of wise and articulate men (since they left this life in which iniquity has abounded) and that there is no one capable of committing his life to writing, standing in great perplexity you urged me, feeble and unlettered, unto this task – having done this as one who urges a plumber to forge a royal diadem.

2. For the power of sight does not so darken, when the eye of the body strives to behold plainly the entire sun, as does the mind when it wishes to

1 Numbers in bold refer to sections of the present translation; numbers in square brackets [] represent the page numbers in Kugener's edition.

2 This superscript, which was added some time after the completion of the text, attributes the work's authorship to a certain John, abbot of the monastery of Beth Aptonia. The work itself, however, was written anonymously. See section 5 of the Introduction for a fuller discussion of this work's authorship.

investigate the deeds of a man such as these. For the narration of *his* deeds requires *his*³ language, or a man like him who is capable of finding words equal to his deeds. Who would not regard me then as rash [125] and foolish when I approach matters beyond my strength? But if, nevertheless, you seek from us an ordinary and simple account of his deeds and marvels, as the time when the king of Israel said to the disciple of Elisha, 'Tell me what the man of God did',⁴ supplicate your Jesus, however, that he strengthen me unto this task since I am weary and weak in mind, like the feet of an old man climbing a sandy hill.

3. Indeed, when I consider the entire career of this man, I believe I see the ladder of the patriarch Jacob which reaches unto heaven, namely, that which is the type of advancement unto excellence, which rises above the earth and reaches to the gates of heaven, on which, Scripture says, the angels were ascending and descending, with the Lord seated above it.⁵ Those who, indeed, ascend upward, the angels guide and lift up while the Lord receives in heaven those who have finished their course. Likewise then this great man started from the lower steps of virtue and was raised unto the vaults of heaven.

4. One does not err, therefore, in saying that he also was set apart from the womb, like Paul, [126] by the foreknowledge of Him who selects from the womb those who are worthy and rejects those who are unlike them.⁶ It is said, for example, concerning Jacob and Esau, while they were yet in the womb, that the one was beloved but the other was hated,⁷ and the passages 'Paul has been chosen from the womb'⁸ and 'sinners shall be rejected from the womb',⁹ which bring one to the same idea.

3 Emphasis is mine, to illustrate the biographer's point that this elevated subject requires an elevated language for adequate expression. Dometios, whom the author addresses, was probably a monk of the monastery Qenneshre which was founded by John bar Aphtonia (d. 537). Dometios was later elevated to the episcopacy of Laodicea in 543, providing a *terminus ante quem* for this work. Located on the east bank of the Euphrates, just south of the Syrian-Turkish border, this monastery would become a major intellectual centre for non-Chalcedonian theology and Greek learning. Although some disagreement remains, it seems likely that the monastery of Beth Aphtonia mentioned above is to be identified with the monastery at Qenneshre. The author, who was later identified as John, probably with John bar Aphtonia in mind, wrote anonymously and was very likely a fellow monk at the same monastery.

4 2 Kgs 8:4.

5 Gen. 28:12.

6 Gal. 1:15.

7 Mal. 1:2–3; Rom. 9:13.

8 Gal. 1:15.

9 Ps. 58(57):3.

5. I see then that my mind is obscured before the splendours of his life, and runs away to silence, as if to some place of refuge, so to speak. Those who are authors of secular histories, by preferring words to deeds, are not very solicitous of the truth. But among us, people for whom it is truth that they breathe in, and especially among those who know how to write, speech is conquered by deeds since virtue is indeed a good which is implanted in the soul whereas speech only buffets the air.¹⁰ Let us therefore not be so greatly wearied by just a part because we are unable to arrive at the whole. Likewise no man among us, neither prophet, nor apostle, nor teacher was at hand to write anything since they all were overcome by the profundity of Severos' spirit.

[127] 6. Now is the time, therefore, to come to the narrative. We will begin the text from whence he started his life, invoking God for help and also the prayers of him for whose sake is this text.

[The Life of Severos]

7. The great Severos was Pisidian by nationality; the city of Sozopolis was his lot. By his works he advanced its fame, or rather, he was not the deliverer of one city only, but of all the faithful of the earth, as experience itself has shown. His parents were some of the great and notable people of [the city] since they were opulent in riches and power. They descended from their father, Severos, who was the bishop of [Sozopolis]. He was one of the two hundred bishops who, with the great Cyril, deposed the impious Nestorius.¹¹ From him, that is, from his grandfather, Severos derived his name.¹²

8. But it seems good to me not to pass over these things since, indeed, we do not know Peter and John according to their country and family, but rather

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 9:26.

¹¹ He refers to the Third Ecumenical Council (431) held in Ephesus, at which Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (d. c.451), was deposed, and the christological traditions of Theodore of Mopsuestia (c.350–428) were condemned.

¹² It is a hagiographical feature to demonstrate the illustrious and pious ancestry of the saint in his biography. This is particularly fitting if the saint in question was a bishop, whose social position in Late Roman society would be very high. This section also tries to allay any doubts concerning Severos' early religious upbringing and convictions. See Zach. *VSev.* 2–4. For this reason, the author very probably ignored the issue of Severos' pagan parentage addressed by Zacharias. See Zach. *VSev.* 2–6, the annotation to paragraph 9 below, as well as section 1 of the Introduction. For a discussion of themes typical of hagiographical literature regarding bishops, see Delehay 1998, 68–78; also Aigrain 1953, 156–59. Our author clearly consulted Zacharias' text here, see Zach. *VSev.* 8–9.

it is from themselves that we have come to know [128] Jonah,¹³ Zebedee,¹⁴ and Bethsaïda.¹⁵ Pearls are to be found on sea coasts and in oysters, royal purple dye in the Tyrian murex, and brilliant stones in quarries. Through themselves, indeed, and not by their countries or families were those great saints renowned. In such a manner we know those saints of yore: being pleasing to God characterized Enoch;¹⁶ perfection, Noah;¹⁷ faith, Abraham;¹⁸ humility, Moses and David;¹⁹ zeal, Elijah;²⁰ the double portion of his master's spirit, Elisha;²¹ the foreknowledge of God concerning him before his formation, Jeremiah;²² the grandeur of all those born of women, the Forerunner.²³ On account of love have Peter and John come to be known; the one who loved the Teacher more than his fellow disciples,²⁴ and the other who was more beloved than them.²⁵ Well then, concerning also this high priest of ours, his works will proclaim him.

9. In such a manner, therefore, when divine grace reared him and brought him to adolescence,²⁶ as a diligent nursemaid it committed him to a secular education. Although in itself it assails those who boast in it alone, for those who use [129] it properly, it is a weapon of salvation. It is, however, an invitation to ruin for those who use it poorly. For a sword too in itself is not bad but adheres to the will of those who wield it.

10. Therefore when Severos was made sufficiently familiar with rhetoric, he was sent to Berytos (Beirut) to learn Roman law. There he was admired

13 The father of the Apostle Peter, see Matt. 16:17.

14 The father of the Apostles James and John, see Matt. 4:21.

15 The fatherland of Peter, Philip, and Andrew, see John 1:44, 12:21.

16 Ecclus. 44:16.

17 Ecclus. 44:17.

18 Ecclus. 44:21; 1 Macc. 2:52.

19 Ecclus. 45:4; 1 Macc. 2:57.

20 Ecclus. 48:1–2; 1 Macc. 2:58.

21 2 Kgs 2:9.

22 Jer. 1:5.

23 Matt. 11:11; Luke 7:28.

24 John 21:15–17.

25 John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21.

26 Hagiographical works commonly relate the precocity of the saint to be lionized. Since Severos was to be one of the great theologians of the non-Chalcedonians, John relates the precocity of the young Severos in academic affairs. The affirmation of the propriety of a secular education seems to reflect the accusations which Zach. *VSev.* attempted to deflect, namely that Severos was a pagan until his student days in Berytos and that later he was Christian in form only. See Zach. *VSev.* 2–6.

by all his contemporaries since he was a man (both) honourable and firm in manner. He was so sharp-minded that he surpassed everybody in learning. What an astonishing thing it is that he had made a hall of gluttony a school of philosophy, so that his future stature would be known beforehand as, for example, are large plants from the first growth. The sacred word was also fulfilled concerning him as concerning righteous Lot, ‘who daily vexed his righteous soul concerning lawless deeds’.²⁷ Indeed, none of the pleasantries or diversions of that city either altered his steadfast character or spoiled his chastity.²⁸

11. It is fitting indeed not to pass by in silence the divine prophetic vision which a man there (in Berytos) had about Severos.²⁹

[130] **12.** For a certain ascetic who was dwelling outside the city, who was famous for foreknowledge and abstinence, saw in a dream (Severos) holding a spade and purifying a spring full of mire, mud, and foul stench. When Severos journeyed to him for prayer, and the ascetic saw him and recognized him from the vision which he had seen beforehand, he said to those at hand, ‘This one will be great among instructors and famous among bishops. With the spade of instruction he will cleanse everything under heaven from the cloud of heresy, mire, and foul stench.’

13. The Holy Spirit bestowed also upon laypeople the gift of prophecy concerning him. While Severos was still frequenting the school of Alexandria, there was a certain man famous before all men, who was sober in life-style, zealous in faith, philanthropic in manner, like Joseph in chastity,³⁰ and merciful to the poor. In church he was constant in prayer, and was enrolled in the holy congregation of those who were called there, the *philipponoi*,³¹ and,

27 2 Pet. 2:7–8. Our author’s narrative of Severos’ youthful intellectual precocity and early academic career is clearly informed by Zacharias’ account. See Zach. VSev. 7–11.

28 This reference to a hall of gluttony is a standard hagiographical flourish which emphasizes the influence of Severos’ sanctity and reveals little about the daily life of the law school itself. Yet the references to gluttony and Lot remind one of Luke 17:28, ‘Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded...’

29 Hagiographical works frequently extol their subjects using the motif of prophetic foresight concerning future glory. This method works best when the seer exhibits an authority acceptable to the work’s audience as, for example, the authority a Christian ascetic would have for a Christian audience.

30 Gen. 39:7–20. Severos was sent to Alexandria to study grammar and rhetoric in 485.

31 Greek, Φιλόππωνοι (*philipponoi*), literally meaning ‘lovers of labour’, referring to an association of laypeople attached to the church who carried out various charitable and ancillary services which might include care for the sick, taking notes of important sermons, etc.

in general, I would say he had in truth the name ‘Christian’. His name was Menas. When he saw [131] Severos and admired him, he said to some of his fellow learners, ‘like a cloud will this one be lifted up above all the earth. He will be honoured among the bishops, and with springs of instruction he will give drink to everyone, like the one who is great among teachers, John, bishop of Constantinople, or rather, of everything under heaven.’³²

14. The subsequent events confirmed by deeds the things said beforehand about him.

15. Such was the skill he had with words that he applied himself greatly to the eloquence of rhetoric. He also studied the law more diligently than all his young colleagues, or rather more than all those who previously were celebrated legal scholars,³³ so that they all elected him to be their law instructor, which was called *antecessor*³⁴ among them.

16. Now when, as I said, Severos was occupied like this, one of his God-loving comrades gave him a book of Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia, or rather, light of the universe, in which he replied to the letters of Libanios, the sophist of Antioch.³⁵ Once Severos encountered [this work], he felt compunction in his soul, since he learned [132] thence what true philosophy is and what is falsely called philosophy. From that point onward he would attend to the former, neglecting the latter. He did this so wholeheartedly that thenceforth he would recognize bad doctrine and the impiety

In Alexandria they were very active in suppressing pagan rites. See Zach. *VSev.* 31–48; also Roueché 2004, XI, 6–7.

32 Zacharias also records Menas’ prophecy. See Zach. *VSev.* 11. John Chrysostom (c.349–407), archbishop of Constantinople and famous Greek Church Father, hailed from Antioch. He was renowned for his asceticism, learning, and powerful preaching. He also suffered exile in 403, as Severos did in 518.

33 Greek, σχολαστικοί (*scholastikoi*), often meaning ‘learned’ or ‘scholar’. In the present context, namely that of a legal school, the term has a more technical meaning, ‘advocate’, ‘legal advisor’, or ‘legal scholar’.

34 Greek, ἀντικήνωρ (*antikēnosōr*), for the Latin term, *antecessor*, which commonly means ‘forerunner’ or carries the military meaning ‘advanced guard’. Derived from *antecedo*, ‘to precede’ or ‘go before’, it means ‘one who goes before’. In the present legal context, it would essentially mean professor of law. The famous legal scholars Theophilus and Dorotheus of the *Corpus Juris Civilis* (529) held this title. The attribution of this title to Severos appears to be unique to this text. See Peisker 1903, 14. Severos began his legal studies in Berytos in 487.

35 Basil of Caesarea. *Lettres Tome III* 202–19 (epistles 335–59). This is also mentioned Zacharias, See Zach. *VSev.* 11. Although Basil of Caesarea (c.330–79) probably studied under Libanios (c.314–94), the famous rhetorician of Antioch, the authenticity of most of these letters has been rejected.

of all heresies. For whatever is true draws to itself all who are worthy even more than a magnet attracts iron. From these [writings] he was led to the study of the *Cathedral Homilies* of Basil and Gregory.³⁶ When he came upon the homilies concerning baptism in the above-named work, he heard Basil lamenting those not baptized, saying, ‘Are you neglectful? Do you delay? Are you tardy? After being taught the Word from your youth have you not yet taken hold of the truth? You are ever learning, but have you not yet come unto knowledge? You live like a dabbler, a seeker until old age. When will you be born a Christian? When will we recognize you as our own? Last year at this time you were waiting. Behold, at this very hour you still await the future. Take heed lest you are found making promises longer than life itself! You do not know what tomorrow may bring. Do not promise things not your own! Unto life we call you, oh man! Why do you flee from the call? Unto [133] communion with life [we call you]. Why do you pass by the gift?’³⁷ [He also heard] Gregory who says, ‘You busy yourself in the midst of the world and are defiled with public affairs. Is it not a grievous thing if you miss out on [God’s] love for humanity? The answer is simple. If at all possible, flee from market and good company. Put on the wings of an eagle, or, to speak more properly, of a dove, – what have you to do with Caesar, or with the things of Caesar?’³⁸ – until you find rest where there is nothing sinful or dark, or where there is no serpent along the road to bite and hinder your goings in God.³⁹ Snatch your soul out of the world. Flee from Sodom! Flee from the fire! Gird yourself and turn not back to what lies behind you lest you be made a pillar of salt. Escape to the mountain lest you perish likewise.’⁴⁰

17. When he heard these things he was anxious since he had not yet received divine baptism, according to a certain custom of his country which, like a

36 This corresponds to Zach. *VSev.* 11. The sermons of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus (329/30–389/90) were frequently collected from the fourth century onwards. These *Cathedral Homilies* may have been one such collection. There is no specific set of sermons by these Church Fathers which goes by that name.

37 Excerpted from Homily 13, Basil of Caesarea. *Exhortatio ad sanctum baptisma* (Exhortation to Holy Baptism), see PG 31 425B.

38 Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25.

39 Gen. 3:15, 49:17.

40 From Discourse 40,19; see Gregory of Nazianzus, *Discours 38–41* 238–41; also Gen. 19:1–31. There are similarities with Haelewyck’s published Syriac translation, but it seems that the Syriac text was translated from John of Beth Aphthonia’s Greek source. See Haelewyck, ed. 2001, esp. 40,19, lines 1–13. In citing this text, Zacharias *scholastikos* very probably used the *versio media* in Haelewyck, ed. 2001, 70–73. See Zach. *VSev.* 52.

law, had taken hold among them, that except for the exigency of death, one would not be baptized until his beard had begun to grow.⁴¹

[134] **18.** Hastening therefore unto baptism and going to Tripoli⁴² without delay, he arrived at the shrine of Leontios the Martyr.⁴³ There he partook in divine baptism, where he became a perfect catch for the signs and wonders of the martyr. Indeed, Severos himself also bore witness to this later in the homily which he composed about the martyr.⁴⁴ After he departed thence, he was seized by profound sadness and distress since, after putting on the divine raiment [of baptism], he would continue still to clothe himself with the garment of a layman and not with the garment of monasticism, namely that which is sacred, genuinely equivalent to the garment of baptism, and also a sign of the death of Jesus.⁴⁵ Such sorrow and remorse seized him, as well as both knowledge and perception of the divine and mystical pain, that immediately he went as he was and even bade his friends farewell by letter. He hastened to Jerusalem, to the veneration of the precious cross, and to the holy tomb of God our saviour. There he took up his cross and promised to follow Him who was crucified.⁴⁶

19. Here the course of the narrative is interrupted by another story which merits an account.

[135] **20.** At the time when Severos was staying at the school of Alexandria, the admirable Peter, that first fruit of the Iberians⁴⁷ whose praise was

41 This corresponds to Zach. VSev. 9.

42 Tripolis is located at the foot of Mount Lebanon in modern northern Lebanon and is called today *Tarabulus esh Sham*.

43 A Christian military commander in Tripolis martyred c.73 during the reign of Maximian (ruled as emperor 286–305). His memory is celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches on 18 June.

44 A homily of Severos concerning Leontios of Tripolis survives in Coptic, published in Garitte 1966. In this sermon, Severos mentions his pagan upbringing and conversion to Christianity during his student years at Berytos. See Garitte 1966, 338–39, 357–58, 374 (IV, 2–6); see also Introduction, section 1. Naturally Severos' opponents took advantage of this when polemicizing against him, which prompted Zacharias' *scholastikos*' defence of Severos' Christian parentage in his life of Severos. Zach. VSev. 8–9. Our author clearly knows Zacharias' account of Severos' adult baptism and agrees that this was customary in Severos' native land, which is plausible since infant baptism became more common only in the late fifth century. Yet Severos' baptism came after a religious conversion to Christianity rather than a long catechumenate. See Zach. VSev. 9.

45 Rom. 6:3.

46 This corresponds with Zach. VSev. 128.

47 Peter the Iberian (c.409–88) was a Georgian prince who renounced his patrimony and embraced the monastic life, eventually founding a monastery at Bethlehem in Palestine. He

found among all men, was dwelling in Palestine, where he was made chief of an assembly of holy monks. To relate the whole story of Peter's life is [a task] greater than the scope of this story, and is rather a narrative work in its own right. He was the son of the Iberian king. When he was very young he was given by his father as a hostage to Theodosius the Younger,⁴⁸ emperor of the Romans, as is the custom of the princes of the nations, to give pledges like these to the emperor to confirm an alliance with him.⁴⁹ The emperor's sister⁵⁰ received him, for Theodosius had three sisters who,⁵¹ along with their brother the pious emperor,⁵² were assiduous in virginity, purity, complete chastity, the study of the Psalms, Holy Scriptures, and fasts. They conducted themselves wisely and in the love of God. When (Peter) came of age and could grow a beard, his way of life showed that he was worthy of his upbringing since he exchanged royal apartments for the desert and royal glory for the lowly life of monasticism. Like a mighty athlete he entered the stadium of monasticism boldly.⁵³ Since he strove lawfully,⁵⁴ tortured the flesh with the works [136] of abstinence, strengthened himself

was an ardent non-Chalcedonian. On 7 August 45, Peter was made bishop of Maiüma, the port of Gaza. This became the centre of anti-Chalcedonianism in an increasingly Chalcedonian Palestine. See Frend 1972, 149–54. Cornelia Horn has produced a new text and translation of the Life by John Rufus (Horn and Phenix 2008).

48 Theodosius II, emperor of the Roman East (401–50, ruled 408–50).

49 It was common for Roman emperors to take hostages from the ruling families of neighbouring vassal states. The purpose was to encourage the local ruler to remain loyal to Roman interests. It would also serve to produce potential heirs who were familiar with Roman ways and, hopefully, amenable to them.

50 Pulcheria (399–453, empress from 450).

51 Arcadia (b. 400) and Marina (b. 403). Theodosius II actually had a fourth sister, Flaccilla (b. 397), of whom one never hears after her childhood. It is likely she died in childhood.

52 Having supported the councils of Ephesus I (431) and Ephesus II (449), Theodosius II played a very pro-Cyrillian role in the fifth-century christological controversies and would therefore be a hero for non-Chalcedonians such as Severos and his hagiographer. See Introduction, section 2.

53 The monastic life is often portrayed as a voluntary emulation of martyrdom. The term, ἀθλητής (*athletes*), commonly refers to Christian martyrs of an earlier era who were often executed in the stadium. The earliest hagiographies were stories of martyrs and many literary motifs passed from them into the narratives of bishops or monks who were understood as undertaking the martyr's struggle in the context of the ascetic life. Much of the imagery in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* compares interestingly with the current text. See ed. Buschmann 1998, 25–31. This *agon* motif has a venerable history, going back to the Apostle Paul himself (1 Tim. 1:18–20; 2 Tim. 2:3–5; 1 Cor. 9:24–27; Phil. 3:13–14, etc.). V.C. Pfitzner has an excellent monograph on the *agon* motif in *Novum Testamentum, Supplements*, 16. See Pfitzner 1967.

54 2 Tim. 2:5.

against the shameful passions,⁵⁵ and with a naked intellect⁵⁶ engaged in close combat with the bodiless demons, he received the crown of impassibility. He therefore became, as a result, the chief of many monks and would thus anoint them for the very same struggles with which he himself also strove previously.

21. Such great foreknowledge did he receive from the God who presides over the contest⁵⁷ of the saints (and who, as is fitting, apportions what is fitting to those who are worthy), and so great an authority over the demons, that he would reveal the evil thoughts of the monks dwelling with him and would thus stop the onset of shameful imaginings. Indeed, he set many laypeople free from demonic possession, as when a certain man brought his daughter to him, who had been tormented for a long time by an evil spirit. Peter saw the demon which came upon her that very moment and wished to assault the girl violently. Having looked upon the unclean spirit angrily, he said, 'You dare these things before me?' He then took the dish set before him for repast and poured it out on the girl's head saying, 'Depart, rebellious spirit, from the creature and image of God.' At the very utterance of the word the unclean spirit fled away as if from torment. On another occasion, [137] a man named Severos came to Peter to become a monk. When the doorkeeper of the monastery, however, informed him of this and said that a man named Severos was standing at the door asking to dwell with them, Peter said to him, 'The era of Severos has not yet arrived.'⁵⁸ At that time, the monks did not comprehend what was said but the final outcome [of events] revealed to them the prophecy which had been uttered. In such a manner Peter set down beforehand the great Severos' renunciation of the world, and for him this was such a precious matter that he would reveal Severos ahead of time to those who were worthy; thus he would prepare them to proclaim him in advance.

⁵⁵ Rom. 1:26.

⁵⁶ Or 'detached intellect', an Evagrian phrase, e.g., Evagrius Ponticus, *Kephalaia Gnostica* I, 65 (especially the second Syriac text in PO 28, p. 47).

⁵⁷ This is difficult to translate precisely in English. One finds here another instance of the *agon* motif. The Syriac phrase used is ܠܐܕܠܐ ܡܢܠܐܐ (*sâyumeh d'agonâ*), which is the equivalent of the Greek term, ἀγωνοθέτης (*agonothetês*), meaning 'judge' or 'president of the game'. Lampe notes related uses of this term with regard to both martyrs and ascetics. See Lampe 1961, 26.

⁵⁸ Yet another instance of hagiographical prescience of the forthcoming hero, Severos. Section 99 in John Rufus' *Life* (ed. Horn and Phenix 2008) also narrates an exorcism by Peter the Iberian, but this seems to be a different tale. The prophetic utterance concerning Severos, however, is clearly unique to this work.

22. After these things, God-clad Peter was elevated to the episcopacy by the decree of God and popular constraint. Like an expert pilot he was entrusted, in storm and tempest, with the helm of the Church of Constantine located near the city of Gaza, which is called Maïuma by the natives, during the era when the emperor Marcian and Proterios, bishop of the city of Alexandria, were persecuting those who did not want to participate in Chalcedonian wickedness.⁵⁹ When therefore everyone was being persecuted and was being delivered up to the plunder of their properties, to exile, and to the miseries which arise from these things, [138] Peter, for the moment, was living in peace since he had not yet experienced any of these things. For Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosius the illustrious and pious emperor and also the wife of Marcian, [Theodosius'] successor, commanded that Peter, as one who had been brought up by her, should not be persecuted. But God removed this tranquillity and showed to the saint that she was not at all worthy of him. And God cried out to him, as He did once to Paul while [the latter] was approaching Damascus full of wrath against the disciples,⁶⁰ not 'Why do you persecute me, Peter,'⁶¹ but said to him, 'Why are you not being persecuted along with me? For you heard me say to Paul, who wanted to proclaim the Gospel without persecutions and afflictions, that my strength is made perfect in weakness.'⁶² Therefore when Peter heard this divine utterance, he departed immediately without anyone being aware. Guided by God, as the time when Habakkuk was brought before Daniel,⁶³ he went to Timothy the

59 Marcian (b. 392, ruled 450–57) succeeded Theodosius II. Unlike Theodosius II, he did not support the pro-Alexandrian synod of Ephesus II (449) and subsequently summoned the Council of Chalcedon (451). He tried to unify the Roman Empire religiously by enforcing the decrees and christological theology of Chalcedon, with force at times, but with little success. The Council of Chalcedon would divide Eastern Christianity (excluding the churches of the East which followed the theological traditions of Antioch and Theodore of Mopsuestia) between supporters of Chalcedon and its opponents (most of Christian Egypt and Ethiopia, much of Christian Syria, and eventually Armenia), now known as non-Chalcedonians or Miaphysites. Following the deposition of Dioscorus, the chief Cyrillian protagonist at Chalcedon, as patriarch of Alexandria (presided 444–51), Proterios, previously Dioscorus' assistant, was elevated in his place in 452. He presided there until his murder in 457, shortly after the death of the emperor Marcian, whose policies he supported.

60 Acts 9:1ff.

61 Acts 9:4, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?'

62 2 Cor. 12:9–10.

63 Dan. 14:33–39, from the Deuterocanonical addition to Daniel also called Bel and the Dragon 1:33–39. Severos could easily have known this from the Septuagint or from the *Lives of the Prophets* which was well-known among early Christian writer. The latter has been published in Charlesworth II 1985, 379–400.

Great at the time when Timothy was forcibly compelled by the people of Alexandria to the episcopacy.⁶⁴ Since they lacked a third bishop to lay on hands in accordance with the canon, as I just said, Peter came, or rather, was led by the Holy Spirit. He lent his hand to the Holy Spirit and he placed it on the priestly head [139] which was worthy of the priesthood. He bestowed the gift of the episcopacy but received [in return] there [the gift of] holiness. After he had lived for a little while in the practice of these excellent works, he departed to the Jesus who was beloved to him.⁶⁵

23. But let us return once again to the story of Severos the Great, proceeding as from one mighty event to another.

24. When he had thus finished with prayer and had been sufficiently endued with the precious cross, the tomb and the Resurrection, he did not return again to Berytos since he recalled that the saviour did not allow the disciple to bury his father and that He called those living in the world dead since they were not partaking in true life but instead were living the life of fish.⁶⁶ He therefore wrote to one of his colleagues named Zacharias [to the effect] that he should sell Severos' furniture and all his clothing and apportion the proceeds among the poor, and that he should send his servants each back to his own country, [thereby] imitating Elisha who boiled the oxen by means of the ploughshares, fed those who had been tilling [his land with them], and [who] did not again return to his house but followed after Elijah the Tishbite.⁶⁷

64 Timothy Aeluros (αἴλουρος [*Ailouros*], 'the Cat', presided 457–60, 475–77) was a non-Chalcedonian presbyter who, together with Peter Mongos (μογγός [*Mongos*], 'the stammerer', then a deacon, but later patriarch of Alexandria: consecrated in 477, openly presiding 482–90) and indeed most of Christian Egypt, broke with Proterios shortly after the latter's ascension. After Marcian's death on 26 January 457, Timothy was consecrated as patriarch of Alexandria as a rival to Proterios (16 March). After Proterios' death later that month, Timothy assumed the Alexandrian patriarchal throne openly. See Frend 1972, 154–55.

65 For the ordination of a bishop to be canonically valid, three bishops needed to participate, hence the timeliness of Peter's presence. Our author's facts are wrong concerning the death of Peter the Iberian, who survived the elevation of Timothy by many years. Peisker 1903, 21. This event was also recorded in Ps. Zacharias, *HE* IV, 1.

66 See Matt. 8:21–22; Luke 9:59–60. When commenting upon these biblical texts, the author introduces this phrase which presumably refers to a life of the senses without reason, higher reflection or purpose. It probably refers also to Matt. 4:19 and Mark 1:17 where Jesus promised to make the disciples 'fishers of men'.

67 This refers to the biblical narrative wherein Elisha slaughtered and boiled his oxen, using the wood of his ploughshares to fuel the fire. See 1 Kgs 19:19–21. This Zacharias is Zacharias *scholastikos* himself. This passage corresponds with Zach. *VSev.* 129.

[140] 25. At this point he journeyed to the monastery of the great Peter previously mentioned. After the superiors of the monastery received him with joy, they then understood that the great Peter's prophecy concerning Severos had been fulfilled. These superiors were: John called the Canopite,⁶⁸ Theodoros the Great,⁶⁹ and John, who both fled from Antioch lest he become the bishop there and chose for himself instead the life of monasticism [together] with the wondrous Peter, even becoming the inheritor of the latter's foreknowledge.⁷⁰ These men indeed were the inheritors whom Peter left behind him. They were greatly knowledgeable, eloquent, and [very much] like him.

26. Pardon me, however, O man of God, Dometios, if I depart here a little from the subject and desire to bring to remembrance certain deeds of these admirable men so that I might make a show from out of the claws of lions for the advantage of the readers.

27. I was acquainted with John, who was called the Canopite, but Theodoros had departed from the body a little before my arrival there.⁷¹ [141] John the Antiochene was embarking upon a journey which was very urgent. [I was acquainted] as well with the foremost ones of that same monastery, Elisha, Stephanos, and Philippos, eloquent men, well versed in every science, but who were especially learned in jurisprudence. At that time they were deemed worthy of the honour of being appointed presbyters.⁷²

68 Identified in the *Life of Peter the Iberian* as John the Deacon, or the Canopite, i.e., from Canopis, a village just south of Gaza, not to be confused with Canopus, a city in Lower Egypt on the western mouth of the Nile, just north-east of Alexandria. See annotation to Zach. VSev. 121. Three km east of Canopus lay the temple in Menouthis whose destruction is recorded in Zacharius *scholastikos*' 'Life' of Severos, see Zach. VSev. 33–43. John Rufus, *Petrus der Iberer* 78–79. This corresponds with Zach. VSev. 128. Zacharias, however, does not refer to the gift of foresight.

69 Identified also in the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, Theodoros of Ascalon was a former legal scholar, or *scholastikos*. For *scholastikoi* see the note in paragraph 15 above. See also John Rufus, *Petrus der Iberer* 78–79.

70 John of Antioch appears to be the John Rufus mentioned together with Theodoros and John the Canopite by Zacharias in VSev. 121. He apparently is also the author of the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, see Horn and Phenix 2008.

71 Since the author's stay at this monastery would have occurred around 511, it is very difficult to identify him with John Psaltes (d. c.600), who was later abbot at the monastery of Beth Aphthonia and was active as a writer only very late in the sixth century. See also Peisker 1903, 24–25.

72 Zacharias also names Elisha, Stephanos, and Philippos as law students at Berytos. Collinet collected the names of known law students at Berytos. See Collinet 1925, 61–98; also Zach. VSev. 70–71. Severos also wrote epistle 35 to Elisha, PO 12/2, 97–106. The office of presbyter had already long been distinguished from the episcopacy. A presbyter would

28. One of them, Stephanos, having been overtaken by a severe illness, supplicated repeatedly the Elder, John the Canopite, to free him from the body, not because he was disheartened by the illness, but since he was in a hurry to depart to the Jesus whom he loved. But the Elder, having been greatly vexed by this request, said that he still needed Stephanos' presence and help, especially since there was persecution. But since Stephanos kept pressing him greatly, John said to him, 'Why are you so hasty to leave us, O my son?' Stephanos then replied, 'It is better to depart and be with Christ.'⁷³ John said to him again, 'Do you have a good life? Are you ready for departure? Do you not fear those who meet and try [the dead] in order to seize them?' Having said that he was confident concerning all these things, a prayer alone granted him release.

[142] **29.** When we inquired after the activities of the great Theodoros, the fathers of his age, who grew old with him, told us many things indeed. But I will mention only one item as confirmation lest the narrative become too long.

30. They say that, at the time when he passed before the cell of a certain God-loving brother and ascetic, a sweet fragrance came upon him. Summoning that brother to himself straightaway, he asked him, 'For what reason do you perfume your cell and make it something (fitting) for harlots and not for monks?' Out of great humility the brother said that he had gone astray and [then] hurled himself [down] upon his face before the feet of the holy man. Theodoros did not leave him without rebuke but condemned him to go a week without food [accompanied] with vigils and nocturnal stations. The brother received the correction joyfully, as something lovely and paternal. But God, who does not let the hidden virtues of His servants remain concealed, revealed the mystery of that sweet fragrance to the Elder. Therefore Theodoros summoned that brother again and urged him to speak what had been hidden. Since he was not given to dispute, the brother simply said, 'Never have I perfumed my cell as you thought, O venerable father. But at the [very] [143] moment of your passing by the great Peter came to me, praising the labours and sweat of my deeds.'

31. Let this one [item] out of many things be said about the great Theodoros.

32. The humility of Elisha indeed, which I mentioned a little before, overcomes entirely the power of speech since speech is too feeble to laud

theoretically derive his authority from that of his overseeing bishop by delegation and would be allowed to preside over the Eucharist.

⁷³ Phil. 1:23.

the person who is adorned with this [virtue]. For edification's sake, however, will I say this one thing out of many facts about this man so that those who hear might emulate him.

33. A certain God-loving man, after beholding him in the school and admiring the serenity of his manner, said, pointing him out with his finger to some people standing nearby, 'Behold! Adam before the transgression!'⁷⁴

34. I have not repeated anything else about these men except in order to demonstrate that the great Severos resembled them, that he was their disciple, and that in conduct he was their equal, or rather, if it is fitting that I speak the truth, he went beyond many. In this manner, just as he shone more than the pagans of his age, likewise he exceeded these fellow monks in considering fasting as something delightful. [144] By vigils and all-night stations, indeed, he made nights into days. [He did this] as well by offices and meditation upon Holy Writ so that in a little while he could recite the Old and New Testaments. He could also readily cite the writings of the teachers who expounded upon them. By these writings [Severos was armed] against every heresy as if equipping him with a complete suit of armour. Likewise he accustomed his body to only as much food and drink as would render him fit for [the service of] philosophy.

35. Since Severos longed for ever more rigorous ascetic practices and the eremitic life, which is the mother [both] of the intellect's contemplation and of the mental activity by which one cleaves to God,⁷⁵ he left his monastery and hastened to the wilderness near Eleutheropolis, where, realizing his desire, he increased his ascetic practices.⁷⁶ To such an extent did he torment his body with fastings, vigil keeping, and the exercise of labours, that he fell into severe illness. But being fervent in spirit in this endeavour, even in sickness, he uttered the Apostolic saying, 'Inasmuch as our outer man

⁷⁴ This refers to the Elisha mentioned in paragraph 27, in which case the law school in Berytus would be the school in question.

⁷⁵ The Syriac phrase, ܬܗܘܪܝܐ ܘܫܐܪܐ (t'eorîa wsâ'urutâ), corresponds to θεωρία καὶ πρακτική (*theoria kai praktikê*), contemplation and practice. This terminology resembles that of Gregory of Nazianzus more than Evagrius of Pontus' (d. 399) *praktikê*, *phusikê*, and *theologikê*. Zacharias uses similar terminology in Zach. VSev. 73, but specifically Evagrian terminology in Zach. VSev. 138.

⁷⁶ This is Eleutheropolis in Palestine (approximately 27 km south-east of Jerusalem), previously called Beth Gubrin, whose inhabitants Vespasian nearly annihilated. Renamed Eleuthero-polis in 200 by Septimius Severus, it became subsequently one of Judaea's most important cities. It was also a major monastic centre until the Arab conquest. The Roman city was destroyed in 794. Currently called Beth Djibrin, it is the site of a village with about 1,000 inhabitants.

is subject to corruption, the inner man is renewed. For my life is Christ and for me to die is gain. When I am weak, then I am strong.’⁷⁷ Those who are prepared to go down to the discipline of the contest [145] need bodily excellence, strength, and health. But those, whose contest is not with blood and flesh but with evil spirits instead,⁷⁸ need the torment of the body which resists the spirit even more than do demons and which has [commonly] been a weapon for them since it is menacing against the soul.⁷⁹

36. But when he collapsed due to the weakness of his body, the one who was abbot of the monastery of illustrious Romanos went immediately to Severos to persuade him [both] to slacken a bit from his great asceticism and to care for his body so as to render it fit for the service of virtue.⁸⁰ After he persuaded Severos accordingly, he brought Severos to his monastery. When he recovered his health and was there for no short time, he became once again the friend of tranquillity, which is the well-known property of monks.

37. At that time therefore, after he had divided up with his brothers the fortune of his parents, which was great, he gave to the poor the greater part of the portion that came to him. With what remained he purchased a monastery in the vicinity of the monastery of his [spiritual] fathers, near Maïuma of Gaza. After he went there once again, he possessed the same zeal [as before], occupying himself both with ascetic practices and exercises [146] of disputation ceaselessly. Not despising manual labour, but with diligence addressing the needs of the poor and strangers who passed along the way, he made a habit of emulating Paul who said to certain of the disciples, ‘You yourselves know that these hands have attended to the [necessities] of those with me and myself, since it is fitting in this way to work and help those who are weak.’⁸¹

38. Like a cloud his fame issued forth into all the east and west since, I

⁷⁷ Rom. 7:22; Eph. 3:16; Phil. 1:21; 2 Cor. 12:10.

⁷⁸ Eph. 6:12.

⁷⁹ Here لَمَحَ (*lkhim*), of *Add.* 17,203, meaning ‘menacing’ or ‘threatening’, makes more sense than سَلِمَ (*khlim*), meaning ‘well’, ‘healthy’, etc., of *Sachau* 321 and hence is used here.

⁸⁰ This monastery was founded by the monk Romanos in 454 to uphold non-Chalcedonian opinion in Palestine. Bagatti identifies it with the ruin Khan el Abd, near Khirbet el Leimun, 2 km south-east of Taqu’a (itself about 8 km south of Bethlehem). See Bagatti 1971, 106, 209. See also Frend 1972, 153–54, 202.

⁸¹ Acts 20:34–35. This monastery was located in Palestine, near Maïuma of Gaza, not far from that of Peter the Iberian. Severos would preside over this monastery in peace for about a decade (c.498–508), i.e., until Elias (d. 518), patriarch of Jerusalem (494–513), sought to bring the monasteries of Palestine into closer conformity with the Council of Chalcedon. See Frend 1985, 163. See also Zach. *VSev.* 137.

reckon, virtue has a proclaimer of its good deeds in the report [that goes out] about it.⁸² Anyhow, from that time onward many bishops, clerics and monks would bring scriptural and dogmatic questions before him [both] by letter and by [personal] conversation. With ease he gave to all of them the resolution of the issues which were raised.

39. A certain man from Caesarea in Palestine named Petros,⁸³ who was of an illustrious family [and] very well versed in grammar and rhetoric, when about to be sent to Berytos was smitten in his soul having learned about Severos. Since he now despised the law which he was about to study, he approached Severos without delay entreating to be [placed] under his obedience. But when [147] Severos turned him away, Petros said that he would never depart and journey again to his homeland. This saint, having marvelled at [Petros'] fervour, consulted with his spiritual fathers, John and Theodoros, concerning him. They advised Severos not to turn away the soul which had so willingly drawn nigh to God. After he was persuaded by them to accept the man, Severos found that [Petros'] promises were not false. In this way as well, many others from well-known cities, who were adorned with [good] families, wealth, intellect, and eloquence, became zealous to emulate Petros since these also, who came requesting to abide with Severos, longed to profit from his wisdom and his other virtues.

40. After these things, a certain Nubian called Nephaliος⁸⁴ (or rather *Kraipalios*,⁸⁵ i.e., the drunken one, in the intoxication of his unstable thoughts,

82 The text is a bit awkward, hence the translation is informed by Kugener's translation in John, *Vie de Sévère* 146, n. 2, '*Car la renommée qui l'accompagne est, pour la vertu, le héraut de ses belles oeuvres*', 'For the fame which accompanies it is, through virtue, the herald of its good works.'

83 Caesarea Maritima on the Mediterranean coast of Judaea was originally a small Phoenician naval station, but became later a major port, Roman provincial capital, mint and garrison town, receiving under Vespasian the rank of colony. It was also an important Jewish and Christian intellectual centre. Origen settled there in 231. The historians Eusebius (c.260) and Procopius (c.500) were both born there. The city flourished into Byzantine times. Little is known about Petros, yet he is also mentioned in Mansi VIII 915. See Peisker 1903, 28, especially n. 4.

84 νηφάλιος (*nephaliος*), meaning 'sober'. Nephaliος was originally a staunch anti-Chalcedonian monk during the patriarchate of Akakios of Constantinople (471–89), i.e., well before the time Severos was active publicly. He reappears later (c.508) as a neo-Chalcedonian advocate during the patriarchate of Makedonios II of Constantinople (c.496–511). See Moeller 1944/5, 73–140. His aggressive activities in Palestine led to Severos' first departure to Constantinople in 508 recorded in paragraphs 40–47.

85 A pun on νηφάλιος, it is derived from κραίπαλάω (*kraipalao*), meaning 'to be intoxicated', 'suffering headache after a debauch', etc.

factions in manner) arrived who was known only for the evil which he did and who was the cause of many quarrels in his homeland. He journeyed to Alexandria stirring up tumult and trouble. Desiring to rend asunder the unity of the churches there, he said, 'It is not fitting for us to partake in the fellowship of the [divine] mysteries with Peter, the bishop here, because of his union [148] with Akakios, bishop of the imperial city.'⁸⁶ [He did] this because he coveted the episcopate of Alexandria and wished to seize it for himself through [these] disturbances. When he missed his goal, he [changed colours] like a polyp or chameleon and began contending on behalf of the Synod of Chalcedon. Even when he went to Palestine, he possessed the same zeal, confounding and troubling everyone. For he armed the bishops of the cities and the clerics against the monastics, saying, 'It is fitting that we banish them lest they lead the people astray since they anathematize the Holy Synod.' Kindled bit by bit by Nephaios, they were inflamed unto acts of persecution so that virtually all the monks there endured harsh persecution. After [all] this, that wicked man also wrote an apology on behalf of the Synod of Chalcedon. The wise Severos tore it apart like a spider's web, having provided a refutation and appropriate confutation of it.⁸⁷ Since he could not endure Severos' refutations, Nephaios hastened to the imperial city seeking to obtain authority over them. He even had a helper in Makedonios, the bishop of Constantinople, that rebellious serpent, or properly speaking, that Arab wolf,⁸⁸ who, in the guise of a pastor of the Church of Christ, lay

86 Akakios, patriarch of Constantinople (471–89), and Peter Mongos, patriarch of Alexandria (477, 482–90), were the primary authors of the *Henotikon* (the letter addressed by the emperor Zeno [474–75, 476–91] to the non-Chalcedonian Church of Egypt). Hence the Acacian schism (482–511) takes its name from the Constantinopolitan patriarch. The *Henotikon* became the basis of the religious policy of the emperors Zeno and Anastasius I (491–518), a policy that attempted to reconcile Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians through affirmation of the Councils of Nicæa (325), Constantinople I (381), and Ephesus I (431), anathematizations of Nestorius (d. c.451) and Eutyches (c.378–454), and anathematizing anyone teaching doctrines diverging from this, whether at Chalcedon or elsewhere. This early attempt at religious reconciliation, a combination of theological balancing act and silencing order, was widely accepted in the Roman East, but gained little favour in Rome and the Roman West.

87 Severos of Antioch, *Ad Nephaium* (CSCO 119–20, 1949). Although Nephaios' work is now lost, its contents can be largely deduced from Severos' work. See Allen 2004, 39–40. See also *CPG* 7022.

88 The Arabian wolf (*Canis lupus arabs*), although comparatively small in stature, is known to attack and devour any domestic animal up to the size of a goat. Pastoralists and farmers would hardly be fond of this animal. From this perhaps arises the poignancy of calling a hierarch, who should be a pastor of the flock of Christ, an 'Arab wolf'.

in ambush. For fear [149] of the emperor,⁸⁹ Nephalius hid his rage for the time being as well as his delight in the evil opinions of heresy, waiting for time to come to his aid.

41. When persecution had been stirred up severely, all the monks of Palestine went before the great Severos in an effort to persuade him to go up to the imperial city with them, saying, ‘Now is the time to show forth the philosophy which you have obtained during all this time and for dialecticians to become soldiers and athletes because of battles and contests.’⁹⁰ Once he submitted to them, he was persuaded by the wise Qohelet who said, ‘a time for peace and a time for war’,⁹¹ and again by the prophet Joel, who admonishes those who have attained to a [certain] measure of sublime quality, ‘Beat your ploughshares into spears and your sickles into swords and let the meek become a warrior,’⁹² that is to say, turn the well-wrought habits by which you cultivate your soul into weapons of war and raise them against the enemies of the truth. He [therefore] accompanied the monks [and] took with himself his spiritual father, Theodoros,⁹³ who in word, deed, and in all the power of [Orthodox] dogma was competent to help Severos, and who was called Lazarus because of the pallor which adorned him due to his great asceticism.⁹⁴

[150] **42.** This was the reason for the admirable Severos’ journey to Constantinople.⁹⁵

43. When the helpers of the evil doctrine of Nestorius beheld him, they trembled just as when the Philistines [trembled] because of David,⁹⁶ since they were already aware of Severos’ wisdom and power in word and in

89 Anastasius I, Roman emperor (491–511). His religious policy was the promulgation of Zeno’s *Henotikon*, but apparently under the influence of Severos and Philoxenos (440–523), bishop of Mabbug, he began interpreting the *Henotikon* in an increasingly anti-Chalcedonian manner.

90 ܠܝܫܢܐ (‘*agonā*’), ἄγων (*agon*); ܐܬܠܝܬܐ (‘*athlitā*’), ὀδηγῆς (*athletes*). John portrays Severos as possessing the ascetic’s love of quiet, making his public career a call to martyrdom. This appeal to Severos would have taken place in 508.

91 Eccl. 3:8: ‘A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.’ Qohelet is the title of Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew (קהלת) and Syriac (ܩܠܬܐ) texts.

92 Joel 3:10, ‘Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.’

93 This is the Theodoros introduced in paragraph 25 above.

94 See John 11:1–44. Contrast with Zach. V^{Sev}. 121 where John the Canopite, instead of Theodoros, is called Lazarus.

95 Severos remained in Constantinople from 508 to 511.

96 Although hardly a literal translation of these scriptural texts this is probably an allusion to the flight of the Philistines before David’s forces. See 1 Sam. 17:51 and 19:8.

dogma.⁹⁷ Buzzing like beetles and wasps, they spread rumours that he agreed with [the teachings] of Eutyches,⁹⁸ tarnishing his reputation like this in order to smear him. When this wise man learned this, without delay he drove away [such] slander when he composed a public discourse to Apion and Paul, high officials of the palace.⁹⁹ When it was submitted, those slanderers crawled underground. Just as when the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Herodians approached Jesus in order to test him,¹⁰⁰ so in like manner were the chiefs of all heresies (the Manicheans, Arians, the sons of the impiety of Eunomius, of Apollinaris, and of Nestorius) watching closely to entrap the admirable Severos in heresies by [using] very intricate and obscure terminology.¹⁰¹ By the power of the [Holy] Spirit he vanquished them, and as he took up the shafts of the doctrines of the holy teachers of the Church, he broke off their bonds, as the champion Samson [broke] the bonds of the Philistines.¹⁰²


97 Acts 18:24.

98 Eutyches (c.378–454) was the influential archimandrite of a large monastery at Constantinople whose extreme theological opposition to Nestorianism led to Eusebius, bishop of Dorylæum, accusing him of the opposite heresy, i.e., of confusing the divine and human natures in the incarnate Christ. Deposed by Flavian, bishop of Constantinople (446–49) in 448, he was retried and acquitted at Ephesus II (449). His teachings were condemned by Pope Leo I (440–61) and in Leo's *Tome* (449). The rise of the emperor Marcian in 450 led to a reversal of fortunes and Eutyches was condemned and deposed at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. As non-Chalcedonians would polemicize and accuse Chalcedonians of Nestorianism, Chalcedonians would accuse non-Chalcedonians of Eutychianism.

99 For Apion, see *PLRE* II, 111–12 ('Apion 2'). For Paul, *PLRE* II, 854–55 ('Paulus 34').

100 Matt. 22:16–46; Mark 12:13–34; Luke 20:1–40.

101 Arius (d. 336) was an ascetic Christian presbyter of the church of Baucalis in Alexandria who taught that the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, was not co-eternal with the Father and hence had a beginning. Opposed by Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373), he and his teaching were condemned at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (325). Arianism, however, became a 'catch-all' term for fourth-century theological opponents of Athanasius and the First Ecumenical Council, although most of these did not adhere to Arius' specific teaching. Eunomius of Cyzicus (d. c.393), who became bishop of Cyzicus in 360, was a leader of a group of extreme Arians. Opposed by Basil of Caesarea (329/30–379), Eunomian theology was condemned by the Second Ecumenical Council (381), or Constantinople I. Apollinaris of Laodicea (d. 390), bishop of Laodicea in Syria, was an opponent of Arianism who was condemned at the Second Ecumenical Council (381). While attempting to emphasize the divinity of Christ, he asserted that Jesus had no rational human soul, the Logos taking its place. Manichaeism was a major gnostic religion. Having its origins in Sassanid Babylonia, it thrived between the third and seventh centuries in the Roman Empire, the Near East, and Central Asia. Its founder and prophet was Mani (c.216–76), who was of Iranian origin.

102 Judg. 16:7–14. A double entendre is in play here. The phrase,  (wlapkâre dhânon psaq), means both 'and he broke off their bonds' as well as 'and he resolved their hard questions'.

[151] 44. At this time, certain adherents of the filthy madness of Diodore, Theodore, and Nestorius were [busy] mangling phrases from the renowned writings of the wise Cyril.¹⁰³ From these writings they corrupted [various passages and] truncated the *Kephalaia*,¹⁰⁴ trying to show that the saint confessed our Lord, God, and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to be in two natures after the union in accordance with the Tome of the wicked Leo.¹⁰⁵ Having compiled a pamphlet, they gave it to Makedonios. Being a man devoid of reason, he rejoiced in it as if it were something powerful and brought it before the emperor. After reading [this work], the emperor was greatly disturbed and grieved in [his heart]. Immediately he summoned the admirable Severos [to appear] before him. When he came and saw that the pious emperor was very distressed, he said unto him the words of David, 'Let not my Lord, the King lose courage concerning him: I shall go and slay the Philistine and remove the shame from Israel.'¹⁰⁶ He then thus took the pamphlet and sat in silence. With the smooth stones,¹⁰⁷ that is to say, the doctrines of the wise Cyril which have nothing of evil heresy in them, he laid low this iniquity and showed that it was [merely] imposture and sacrilege. With the love of truth he set down the *Kephalaia* [of Cyril], as well as those precepts [152]

103 Cyril (d. 444), bishop of Alexandria (412–44), was the main protagonist of the Council of Ephesus I (431). Being the victor at Ephesus I, the interpretation of his christology would be the central issue between eastern advocates and opponents of the Council of Chalcedon (451). Diodore (d. 390), bishop of Tarsus (372–90), was a theological opponent of Arianism and Apollinaris (c.310–90), stressing against Apollinaris the full humanity of Christ. He is primarily known for this and his adherence to the Antiochene tradition of a comparatively literal and historical hermeneutic of scripture. Theodore (c.350–428), bishop of Mopsuestia (392–428), was a student of Diodore and the intellectual powerhouse of Antiochene theology, christology, and scriptural exegesis. Although he died in the peace of the Church, his christology would be condemned at the councils of Ephesus I and Constantinople II (553). Nestorius (d. 451), bishop of Constantinople (428–31), after whom Nestorianism would be named, was a disciple of Theodore theologically although, it seems, a somewhat inept one. The Antiochene christology that he represented would be condemned at the Council of Ephesus I.

104 The *Florilegium Cyrillianum* (published in Hespel 1955) was a neo-Chalcedonian compilation of Cyril's writings attempting to affirm a Chalcedonian interpretation of Cyril's christology. Originating in Alexandria c.482, Severos would have first encountered it in Constantinople between 508 and 511. Severos' *Philalethes* was a response to this work. See Allen and Hayward 2004, 41–42. See also CCT II.2, 22–23.

105 Leo I (d. 461), pope of Rome (440–61), the great Western opponent of the Council of Ephesus II (449) and Dioscorus (d. 454), bishop of Alexandria (444–54); Leo's *Tome* (449) would influence the Council of Chalcedon, introducing the phrase 'in two natures' which would prove so controversial.

106 See 1 Sam. 17:32, 36.

107 1 Sam. 17:48–50.

which [both] preceded and followed them. Because of this Severos named the book, *Philalethes*, i.e., ‘the Lover of Truth’.¹⁰⁸ When this work appeared, it caused the faithful to exult and heretics to lament. For us, therefore, it is time to chant a hymn of victory, as when those women tambourine players raised the shout to David, ‘Severos has killed his ten thousands!’¹⁰⁹

45. Thus from that point onward, no heretic would dare converse or even meet with the great Severos, just as it is written in the Gospel concerning Jesus our God.¹¹⁰ Being ashamed they fell silent, whereas in the end a [public] contest befell Severos because of Makedonios, whose wickedness was deceiving the emperor’s simplicity.¹¹¹ As a result, this wise man went before the emperor and said, ‘If, O Emperor, the matter of the peace of the Churches and the unity of the nations is of concern to you and you would have pity upon the flock of God, which He has redeemed by His blood, it is proper and fitting as well as useful for all that you should ask the bishop of the church here whether he affirms that He who became incarnate on our behalf, without change became man, and is born of Mary, is one of the Trinity and whether she who gave Him birth is the Mother of God.’¹¹² The [153] God-fearing and God-loving emperor, having applauded Severos, immediately sent the nobles of his kingdom, the general Patrikios and the *magister* Celer to interrogate Makedonios.¹¹³ When they arrived, they set before him the emperor’s question. At once, he leapt like a pig stuck in the heart and declared that he never would confess this, even should one threaten to sever his tongue. When the emperor heard this report from them, he smote Makedonios with the condemnation of exile and ordered that a synod be gathered in Phoenicia.¹¹⁴

46. These are the first contests of the admirable Severos. What would be clearer than this victory?

108 Severos of Antioch, *La Philalèthe* (CSCO 133–34, 1952).

109 1 Sam. 18:6–7.

110 Matt. 22:46.

111 Makedonios II, patriarch of Constantinople (496–511). He was mentioned previously in paragraph 40.

112 The term, *Theotokos* (θεοτόκος), means ‘birth-giver of God’. Controversial during the christological crisis leading up to the Council of Ephesus I (431), it would henceforth become the watchword of Cyrillian theologians, Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian alike. For a discussion of this term in relation to Ephesus I, see McGuckin 2004, 27–32.

113 For Patrikios, see *PLRE* II, 840–42 (‘Patricius 14’). For Celer, *PLRE* II, 275–77 (‘Celer 2’).

114 The deposition of Makedonios occurred on 7 August 511. This is referred to briefly in Zach. VSev. 152. It is covered in more detail by Ps. Zacharias, *HE* VII, 7–8.

47. After he set right, therefore, the affairs concerning which he went up to [the imperial city], he returned to his place once again. Then the emperor, those in high places, and many friends tried to persuade Severos to remain in the city and abide with Timothy (who after Makedonios was seated on the [episcopal] throne in Constantinople) and guide him in all doctrinal truth.¹¹⁵ But with the words of Gregory the Theologian he cried out to them saying, 'Return to me, desert and Christ,' bade them all farewell and departed.¹¹⁶

[154] 48. The bishops of the East assembled rapidly in Sidon of Phoenicia since the emperor's command impelled them. When they were assembled they investigated the acts of Flavian, bishop of Antioch, and found him to be a holder of the opinions of Makedonios and of those like him. Since he would not abandon his evil opinion, they deposed him canonically.¹¹⁷

49. When due to the decision taken by the bishops a search was undertaken for who would rule as the head of the church of Antioch, all the bishops, monks, and laypeople cried out as with one voice, 'Severos to the throne! The [Holy] Spirit seeks Severos for the chair, just as He previously sought Paul and Barnabas for [the proclamation of] the Gospel!'¹¹⁸ They then had a manifest sign, namely the concord of all of them concerning this issue. They said that only Severos could cleanse the East from the heretical and long-lasting leprosy.¹¹⁹

50. Both the emperor and God approved and confirmed these things. Therefore certain well-known pious persons were sent to Severos. Those who were sent imitated the servant of the patriarch Abraham, since once they approached the monastery of the admirable [155] Severos, they said, 'Lord God, establish today our path, and in case you want this holy man to be your shepherd, send him to the gate to answer us.'¹²⁰

51. The great Severos, however, usually inhabited the upper storey of the monastery and therefore hardly ever engaged with anyone, unless they were

115 Timothy I, patriarch of Constantinople (511–18).

116 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration XLII* 24.

117 Flavian II (d. 518), patriarch of Antioch (498–512). The depositions of the relatively moderate Makedonios II and Flavian II in favour of more strongly anti-Chalcedonian patriarchs probably doomed any possible reconciliation of Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, fatally undermining the policy of Zeno's *Henotikon*. See Frend 1972, 216–20; Frend 1973, 165; also Bury 1958, I, 436–44.

118 Acts 13:2–3.

119 Severos' ascent to the patriarchal throne of Antioch took place in November 512.

120 Gen. 24:12, 42.

[accompanied only by] a few and these were coming to him concerning scriptural or controversial questions. Petros, his disciple and sub-prior whom we have mentioned above, fulfilled the needs of those who visited [the monastery] and would gladly see off every [visitor].¹²¹

52. At the very moment when these men arrived, it [just so] happened that Petros and all the brethren had gone out for a little for some business outside the monastery. When the emissaries, therefore, were knocking at the gate, there was nobody available to answer them. When they kept knocking, the saint marvelled and went downstairs. Having opened the gate, he received those men. They then repeated to him the words of that faithful servant, 'Blessed is the Lord who directed our path today and who has indeed fulfilled our prayer.'¹²² After Severos asked about the reason why they came, they said to him, 'The pious emperor has commanded that you attend the synod,' and they [156] held out before him the royal decree. Since he could not resist the command, he received them and showed them hospitality. He departed with them the following day.

53. After he had thus departed and learned the decision [made] regarding him, he considered flight and said, 'I am unfit for so sacred a ministry as this. How can I, who am unworthy and unprepared, sit on the throne of the great Ignatius?'¹²³ Consecrate another who is more capable.' This caused the bishops and monks to argue [with him] even more, since he who is ready to be received [into office] is easily despised, while he who is taken with difficulty, is steadfast [even] in conflict. They therefore took Severos with care and guarded him with great caution.

54. At that time, certain close companions who had [previously] studied with him wrote to Severos and reminded him of the pious and illustrious Menas' prophecy concerning him, advising Severos neither to refuse nor to flee from the election of God.¹²⁴ Not to hear when God is calling is hardly without peril, even if the refusal is due to modesty.

55. Little by little, he gave way to these circumstances and made his will submit. Having seen, on the other hand, [157] the forceful stance of the bishops, monks, and laypeople, and that there was nothing he could do, he went with them to Antioch.

121 This is the Petros from Caesarea in Palestine first mentioned in paragraph 39.

122 The servant is presumably the Eliezer of Gen. 15:2. The citation is a very loose quotation of Gen. 24:27.

123 Ignatius of Antioch (c.35–107), Apostolic Father and bishop of Antioch.

124 This prophecy is related in paragraph 13 above.

56. When the inhabitants [of Antioch] learned this, all of them of every rank, together with their wives and children, went out from the city and received him with a multitude of praises, crying out in unison, 'For a long time we have been seeking to partake in the holy mysteries. Deliver the city from heresy! We want our children baptized! Anathematize the Council of Chalcedon! Anathematize the council which has turned the world upside down now! Anathematize the rebellious council now! Anathematize the council of deceivers now! Anathema is Council of Chalcedon! Anathema is the Tome of Leo! Let all the bishops now anathematize it! He who does not anathematize is a wolf and no shepherd.' If anyone was reckoned as sharing the opinions of Flavian, he would personally hear, 'So and so, anathematize the council!' And so it was. When the council was anathematized by everybody with these cries and with cries like them, then acclamations [of Severos] [158] arose. The great Severos, however, was rejoicing [more] in these cries [against the council] rather than in the praises [of himself].

57. In this manner, therefore, Severos entered the city gloriously and brilliantly, receiving the episcopacy that very day. In number indeed, he ascended to the throne of Ignatius after many who followed Ignatius; but in excellence, [he came] immediately after Ignatius. After he had thus acceded to the episcopal seat, he composed a sermon filled with the teaching of all the accuracy of theology, in which he exposed the man-worship of Nestorius¹²⁵ and the dreamlike fantasy of Eutyches.¹²⁶ He also made a refutation of the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo as well, warning that one take care to depart from [these] two precipices equal in impiety, proceed along the Royal Road,¹²⁷ and confess the '*one nature from two*' of God the

125 The phrase used, *ܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܡܢܫܐ* (*palkhut barnāshā*), corresponds to the Greek term ἀνθρωπολατρεία (*anthropolatreia*) and has two opposing usages in the Nestorian controversies. From the Nestorian viewpoint, the term relates to the συνάφεια (*sunapheia*) or conjunction of the human and divine natures of Christ, which would suffice in avoiding such man-worship. From the anti-Nestorian viewpoint, man-worship is implicit in such a conjunction. The term is clearly used here with the second meaning.

126 Apologetically speaking, Severos is placed between the supposed christological extremes of Nestorius and Eutyches. The implicit condemnation of Eutyches is significant since Chalcedonian polemics accused Dioscurus, Severos, and others of being Eutychian in theology. Severos naturally viewed the Chalcedonians as Nestorian.

127 This refers to the King's Highway of Num. 20:17–21, especially 17, 'Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.' The King's Highway was an ancient trade route linking Egypt with Damascus and the Euphrates via Palestine and Jordan.

Word Incarnate.¹²⁸ Then after having uttered a few words of moral direction as the moment allowed, he dismissed unto bodily rest the people who were weary.

58. Such was this glorious day of the entrance [into Antioch] of [this] God-clad man. After [159] Severos ascended [to the episcopal throne], immediately he expelled from there those kitchen servants and cooks of the episcopal mansion as well as every culinary invention found among them. He pulled down the bath-house which was there, just as the pious kings Hezekiah and Josiah [pulled down] the statues of Ba'al.¹²⁹ He kept up the hard life, as was indeed his monastic habit, i.e., in reclining on the ground, refraining from bathing, and by long services of chanting. In the eating of pulse, [he behaved] like the youths of Babylon.¹³⁰ The worthless and wretched bread which bakers customarily made for the poor was brought to him from the market.

59. From that point onward, like a fountain, he ceased not from watering, as ground which is parched, the people of Antioch who were hungering, not with hunger for bread or thirst for water, but with the hunger to hear the word of the Lord, according to the word of the prophet.¹³¹ The people indeed lacked the grace of teaching due to the wickedness of the men who happened to govern them previously, [men] who tended themselves rather than to the sheep. In this way [160] therefore, as it is written, through his words those who hungered were taught by God.¹³²

60. Having seen that the Antiochenes rejoiced in song, some in those of the stage while others in those of the poets of the Church, he condescended

Under the Roman emperor Trajan (ruled 78–113), it was rebuilt as the *Via Traiana Nova*. Later it served as a pilgrimage route for Christians, and even later as a Hajj route until the Ottomans built the Tariq al-Bint.

128 The terminology used here is at the crux of the later Christological controversies. The phrase advocated here, *μία φύσις ἐκ δύο* ('one nature from two'), is classically Cyrillian and is supported by non-Chalcedonians emphatically. Chalcedonian christology uses *ἐν δύο φύσεσι* ('in two natures') which non-Chalcedonian polemics understood to be essentially Nestorian in content. Peisker reports that Severos delivered this homily (preserved in BL, Add. 12149) at the Church of Romanos on 25 November 512. See Peisker 1903, 41. The sermons of Severos of Antioch are collected in various volumes of PO, see CPG 7035 and Appendix to the Bibliography.

129 2 Kgs 18:1–8, 23:1–30; 2 Chron. 29:1–19, 34:1–7.

130 Dan. 1:1–21.

131 Amos 8:11.

132 Isa. 54:13; 1 Thess. 4:9.

even unto this. Like a father who prattles with his children, he appointed chanters and composed hymns and handed them over [to the people]. Even in this he imitated God, who, when He saw the sons of Israel bedazzled by the sacrifices of bulls, the slaughter of sheep, the burnt offerings of idols, and the shedding of blood (things to which they had become accustomed in Egypt), and that in departing from such things they would be obstinate, He did not turn the Israelites from them all at once. Instead he commanded that they offer these things to Himself, preserving the Israelites for the time when deliverance from these practices was fitting. Severos did not compose chants which were poetical, entertaining and effeminate, leading those who encounter them into pleasures of perdition rather than to that which is spiritual. [Instead he wrote] chants full of sighs and calling those who hear them unto the tears loved by God. As he drew many away from the ruin of the theatre, he made them church-going.¹³³ Indeed some of these hymns teach theology [161], contemplation and dogmatic accuracy.¹³⁴ Others of them reveal the depths of the divine Scriptures, while yet others direct one to the possession of [good] works. Many of them were recited about the desolations and afflictions of the whole people and the universal chastisements. In times of drought, dearth of rain, rapacious pestilences, and the irruption of demonic attacks, like Moses he would stand against the wrath of God,¹³⁵ appeasing Him by [his] intercessions for all the people. Severos called to His remembrance not only the vows of the fathers, but [also] the pains which He suffered on our behalf, delivering us from the servitude of the Adversary and the demons.¹³⁶

61. When, by the forbearance of God, the beastly demons were set loose upon men, they were shepherding men like animals, forcing them to put their tongues to whatever happened to be there and to dispatch it to the belly, whether it be glass or iron, with the result that when [people] would vomit these up, what they brought up turned out to be like coals from a fire. This great and just man, through prayers, supplications, and petitions which were fitting, urged God to drive the demons away from His creation.

133 It was common for patristic and ascetic writers to condemn the theatre as a source of moral dissolution. Zach. VSev. 66 condemns the theatre as well, albeit in another context.

134 The terms used here, ܬܠܝܬܐ – ܬܝܢܐ – ܬܠܝܬܐ (*t'eologiâ – t'eoriâ – dogmâ*), corresponding to the Greek θεολογία – θεωρία – δόγμα (*theologia – theoria – dogma*), theology – contemplation – dogma, do not seem to reflect Evagrius usage.

135 Exod. 33:30–35.

136 Several of Severos' hymns have been translated into English by E.W. Brooks in PO 6/1 and 7/5.

Severos would pray with suffering, saying, ‘Lord, since we walk in new paths of sin, [162] we are chastened with new types of punishment since we have overtaken the customary punishments of [your] wrath.’ And He who hastens towards mercy heard His servant, and with the very same deeds [God] proclaimed to him as He did to the righteous Lot and Moses the great, ‘Behold, I have accepted your countenance as well as this petition [of yours], and I shall be forgiving to them according to your word.’¹³⁷ Behold, at this point the demons [began] crying out, and were fleeing as if put to flight by Severos. One could see the streets take on the appearance of a church so that everyone sang the praises of the God-clad Severos instead of those of the pernicious Phoebus.¹³⁸

62. For as long as it was a remedy for the sins we were committing, Severos would stand against the [divine] wrath, and by prayer would stay the coming chastisements. But since our transgressions were too great for pardon, God said to him these words which He had spoken to Jeremiah, ‘Do not pray for them because I will not hear you. Alas, do you not see how much everyone, in their evil ways, is angering me?’¹³⁹ As if removing the particular column which bears the weight of everything, when God had removed Severos from there, He handed the city over to complete destruction.¹⁴⁰

[163] **63.** This God-clad man, having also predicted this fate to the natives of the city, admonished them to stay the wrath of God by prayer and penitence as did the Ninevites.¹⁴¹

64. Behold, these were the words of the prophecy which he spoke in the homily which he composed for them concerning the arrival of the demons, ‘Let us seize necessity and demonstrate repentance willingly. By this, not only will we escape [divine] wrath, but will also gain a reward since such a desire is not without recompense. Before something else should befall us, therefore, let us conduct ourselves philosophically and in the love of labour. For if we are transformed neither by this chastisement nor by fear, [our lot]

137 Gen. 19:21; Exod. 32:11–14. These prayers were almost certainly placed in Severos’ mouth by the author to inculcate the desired moral perspective – another feature of hagiographical literature.

138 Phoebus is an epithet of Apollo who, among other things, was the patron of music and poetry and hence closely associated with the theatre. Zacharias refers to him as Apollo rather than Phoebus. Zach. VSev. 47, 54.

139 Jer. 7:16–17.

140 Judg. 16:22–31.

141 Jonah 3:5.

will be wanting since we will be deprived of God and strangers before Him. We will be delivered unto complete destruction and will fall into a deep pit.’¹⁴²

65. After his departure, when he learned that they all were persecuted, Severos wrote thus to the monks, ‘You are pillars and supports of the city of the Lord. But if you are pillars and supports which are moved and displaced from your stations, what else can one expect but some scourge from God and these great evils from which there is no escape?’¹⁴³

[164] **66.** In a letter about the subject which he wrote and sent to certain zealous people, Severos related and recorded precisely about his wondrous departure and the sufferings which befell him during it, as well as the judgments of God which came about due to it. We will refer to this letter for those who seek to read this work.¹⁴⁴

67. When the shepherd was thus driven away, the flock was set before wolves. False shepherds took the place of true shepherds over the flock. They neither pitied their flock, nor strengthened the infirm, nor bound up the wounded, nor brought back those who wandered off. Instead, whosoever was healthy in the faith they subjected to heresy.¹⁴⁵

68. A man who was a grammarian by trade but skilled in those heresiarchs of today, or rather, in those of yesteryear as well, composed a not-so-short defence of the Council of Chalcedon, saying, ‘Rightly did they say that, after the union, our Lord God Jesus Christ exists in two natures united in one hypostasis,’ even affirming that this amounts to the same thing as saying *the one Incarnate nature of God the Word*. He also composed another treatise

142 The sermons of Severos of Antioch are collected in various volumes of PO, see *CPG* 7035 and Appendix to the Bibliography. This portion is excerpted from *Cathedral Homily* 54. See PO 4, 60–61.

143 Although not an exact quote, the content of this citation is very close to Severos of Antioch’s Epistle 35, *To the Monks of the East*, translated by Brooks in PO 12/2, especially page 108.

144 The letter on his flight from Antioch in *Dam. Patr.* 12/18, see Vööbus 1975a, 295–98 and Introduction, section 1. Emperor Anastasius I died on 9 July 518 and Justin I (ruled 518–27) ascended to the throne in his place. At once he pursued a pro-Chalcedonian religious policy. Not long after, Severos was summoned to Constantinople and faced severe punishment. He escaped, however, to Seleucia Pieria and from there set sail for Alexandria on 29 September 518, living the remainder of his life in exile. At Easter, 31 March 519, Justin I restored communion between Constantinople and Rome, which was adamantly Chalcedonian.

145 Acts 20:29; Ezek. 34:4; Titus 1:10–16. The author is speaking about the Chalcedonian restoration in 518. Paul II (presided 518–21) succeeded Severos to the patriarchal throne of Antioch.

which, by the testimonies of many holy fathers [165] and ancient teachers, as well as those who came later, bolstered the position which he supposed.¹⁴⁶ The grammarian cited them, but distorted them. Only the God-clad Severos himself could undertake the [task of] overturning and refutation, for he mocked the grammarian in such a manner that even those who dabbled only a little in dogma laughed at the latter's ignorance. For Severos demonstrated entirely the absurdity that arises, such as implying that the entire Trinity was incarnate in all humanity, when the grammarian said that, 'the two natures are two essences, if the sense of [the term], essence, is general'. Severos even demonstrated, by the very definitions of the same council, that the council, of which the grammarian was the apologist, was obscure. When indeed the grammarian affirmed that to say *two united natures*, without adding *of the one incarnate [nature]*, is an obscure notion according to the decision of Holy Cyril against the Orientals,¹⁴⁷ Severos replied to him, 'You have not understood, oh you, the thought of the great and wise Cyril when he said that the orientals were obscure, *not* because they did not say *one incarnate nature*, for this is a thought not only obscure, but also erring and heretical, mixing things which do not mix, and forcing terms together which are opposed and contradictory. I [166] mean *in two natures united* [and] *the one incarnate nature of God the Word*' (the renowned Cyril said the same thing as well in the *Epistle to Succensus, bishop of Diocaesarea*) since they used an ambivalent term which is inclined to two sides and thus did not reveal the truth. Nevertheless, Severos said to the grammarian, 'Let us grant, as a favour, that Cyril is cursorily cited in this way. Either show, then, that your council said, *one incarnate nature*, or, according to your definitions, it sits in the gloom and darkness of error.'¹⁴⁸

146 John of Caesarea (whether of Palestine or Cappadocia is unclear), a presbyter and grammarian, apparently influenced by the neo-Chalcedonian movement, composed the *Apology for the Synod of Chalcedon* (CPG 6855–62) in about 511, which, unfortunately, is mostly lost. Severos composed *Against the Impious Grammarian* (CSCO 93/4, 101/2, and 111/2) as a rebuttal, which was published only in 519, i.e., after Severos' deposition from the patriarchal throne of Antioch. See Allen and Hayward 2004, 27; also CCT II.2, 24–25, 52–72. The relevant works are gathered in CPG 7024.

147 Namely, against the Antiochene theologians, led by John, bishop of Antioch (429–41), during the Nestorian controversies before and after the Council of Ephesus I (431).

148 The christological phrase, 'the one incarnate nature of God the Word' (Syriac: ܚܕܐ ܬܠܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܡܒܫܪܐ, *khad kyânâ d'alâhâ meltâ mbassar*; Greek: μία Φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη, *mia physis tou Theou Logou sesarkōmenē*) is commonly used by Cyril of Alexandria to indicate the intimate union of the divine and human natures in the incarnate Christ. By Severos' time, it had become effectively a rallying cry for non-Chalcedonian theologians whose intention was to remain faithful, in both spirit and letter,

69. But now is not the time for dogma. For those who are willing, it would be easy to read the wonderful treatise which the man of God wrote against the grammarian, which, in honour of the Holy Trinity, is divided into three parts. It is reported that, after having read them, the heretics said to the grammarian, 'It would have been more helpful had you held your tongue rather than having opened such a lion's mouth against us, for he has uprooted our dogma "from the roots and foundations", as it is said.'¹⁴⁹

70. Not long afterwards, the devil inflicted another scourge upon the faithful, and the word prophesied by Saint Paul came to fulfillment, saying, 'Even from among your [167] own will arise men [speaking] perverse words so as to draw the disciples after them.'¹⁵⁰ For there was a certain old man among the bishops,¹⁵¹ who had previously gone mad and out of his mind, and, as it were, lost the ability to reason: for a long time he was besotted with drunkenness and the docetism of Valentinus, Mani, Marcion, and Eutyches.¹⁵² As the period of our pastor's absence allowed, the old man declared, saying that the all-holy body of Christ our God, which He had with Himself united hypostatically from Mary, having a rational soul, is impassible and immortal from the [moment of] union with the Word, not being subject to our natural and harmless passions, i.e., hunger, thirst, fatigue from travel, and death, but [instead] suffered these things in surmise only and not in truth. For he said in his first volume, "'Sin is the sting of death",¹⁵³ so that when sin is

to the christology of Cyril.

149 מְדָדָה (*m'adarâ*, meaning 'helpful' or 'useful') rather than מְדָדָה (*m'ddâ*) is assumed here, as Kugener also seems to assume. See John, *Vie de Sévère* 166.

150 Acts 20:30.

151 Julian, bishop of Halikarnassos (d. after 518), once deposed from his see, took refuge in Alexandria. He became the leader of the Aphthartodocetists, i.e., the non-Chalcedonians who taught the incorruptibility of the body of Christ *before* the resurrection. Severos taught, in contrast, that the body of Christ was incorruptible only *after* the Resurrection.

152 For Mani and Eutyches, see annotation to paragraph 43. Valentinus (c.100–c.160) was a very well-known and successful gnostic Christian theologian of the second century. The author would have considered Valentinus to be a docetist since his system would not have affirmed Christ as partaking in the materiality and humanity shared by humans, and hence he would only have 'appeared' to suffer on the cross. Marcion of Sinope (c.85–160) was an early Christian bishop, whose teaching was condemned for refusing to identify the Old Testament and its God with the revelation of the New Testament and its God. The Old Testament God for him was the Demiurge who created the material world, the Old Testament Law, and was the vengeful God of the Jews, whereas the God of the New Testament was the universal God of compassion and mercy who opposes the Demiurge. For Marcion, Jesus was sent by this heavenly Father but had only an imitation of a human body rather than a genuine one. In this latter view his teachings resemble docetism.

153 1 Cor. 15:56.

not stinging, death is without efficacy although it seems to act.' Behold, he [even] said that death acted in Christ in surmise [only] and not in truth! In his obscure and very long, or rather very lamentable book [just] cited, he also wrote, 'For He who by right possessed the capacity [either] to suffer or not to suffer, since his existence could not suffer and He is also impassible in the body, [168] voluntarily became passible on our behalf.' And again [he wrote], 'We say, therefore that He is passible since He [in fact] suffered and not because he was capable of sufferings.'¹⁵⁴

71. Severos, the great teacher, showed these things to be dreamy illusions, writings inscribed in water, as well as more contemptible than smoke and shadows. Armed with the truth of Divine Writ and with the Fathers who interpreted it, Severos showed from them that the all-holy body of God the Word was indeed passible, mortal, and thus corruptible and susceptible to these things up until the Resurrection, but impassible, immortal, and thus incorruptible after the Resurrection.

72. But let us set these matters aside, so as we have said previously, not to let dogma occupy us here. We have only intended to show how this God-clad man, even though far away, was diligent regarding his flock and, by his writings, would let loose against the wolves as if with arrows.

73. So stood the state of affairs when the mighty emperor summoned the great Severos to consult with him about the peace of the Churches.¹⁵⁵ Severos [169] left, therefore, without considering his personal safety, and departed by sea during the season of winter, when it is unnavigable and nobody undertakes a voyage. Having committed everything to God, he demonstrated that there is nothing more powerful than he who is prepared to suffer all things for the truth. Although he knew beforehand the vanity and the futility of his voyage, he departed anyway, fleeing the accusations

¹⁵⁴ The key sources for the Julianist controversy are gathered in *CPG* 7026–31. The most extensive works of these are *Sévère d'Antioche, La polémique antijulianiste*, ed. and trans. *Hespel* in *CSCO* 224, 295, 301, and 308 (text); and 225, 296, 302, and 309 (French translation).

¹⁵⁵ Anastasius I (ruled 491–518), the immediate predecessor of the emperors Justin I (ruled 518–27) and Justinian I (ruled 527–65), pursued a religious policy conciliatory to the non-Chalcedonians. Justin I and Justinian I pursued strictly pro-Chalcedonian policies, with some wavering under Justinian I. One of these waverings occurred in 535/536 when Justinian I invited Severos to return to Constantinople. Severos chose to go, although he must have been aware of Justinian's Chalcedonian leanings and hence somewhat reluctant. His departure for Constantinople occurred in the winter of 535/536.

of the fault-finders who were going to complain even if he did not depart, saying that he was a hindrance to the peace of the Churches, had betrayed everyone, and attended only to himself. The consummation of events proved them wrong since they had erred of the truth.

74. After Severos had embarked, he was detained at court for so very long a time that he was bereft of any hope of return from there. But God did not allow travails such as these to be in vain, but granted Severos a reward worthy of his travails, or rather of his zeal. For he received and carried away the venerable Anthimos, archbishop of Constantinople, who was taken captive by Severos' prayers and teaching. How this took place we need to speak.¹⁵⁶

75. While the God-clad Severos was in the royal palace, [170] the venerable Anthimos yearned to see him and urged the empress that this be allowed him.¹⁵⁷ When the empress revealed the matter to the great Severos, he did not agree to it immediately, awaiting perhaps permission from above concerning this. Having finally been persuaded, as the outcome showed, Severos consented to the visit. Once Anthimos entered, this saint (i.e., Severos) prostrated himself and bade that Anthimos pray. The latter, however, did not want to do so and declared that he would not dare do so. Severos bade him again to pray and when Anthimos prayed, Severos replied, 'Amen.' This is proof that Severos received permission from on high, for the preserver and teacher of all exact orthodoxy would not pray with Anthimos before the latter turned to the good.¹⁵⁸ Once they seated themselves, the God-clad Severos said to

¹⁵⁶ Anthimos I, patriarch of Constantinople (535–36). See Frend 1972, 270–72.

¹⁵⁷ The empress Theodora (500–47), wife of emperor Justinian I (c.482–565, ruled 527–65). Although Justinian I pursued a pro-Chalcedonian religious policy, he unsuccessfully sought reconciliation with the non-Chalcedonians (e.g., with the condemnation of Origen [c.185–c.254] and the *Three Chapters* in 543–44, and the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople II in 553). Theodora was known for her strong non-Chalcedonian sympathies and was a driving force behind the efforts of Justinian I towards such reconciliation.

¹⁵⁸ Text by Michael the Syrian about this episode, cited by Kugener: 'From the narrative about Saint Severos when he was in the palace of Theodora the Queen: Anthimos, who was patriarch of the said city (Constantinople) yearned to see Severos. When the queen allowed the saint (Severos) to await the decision from on high, Severos gave permission and Anthimos proceeded. After Anthimos prostrated himself, Severos allowed him to pray. This was the manifestation of spiritual prompting since Severos, who was the diligent watchman of Orthodoxy, would not have prayed with heretics. After Anthimos prayed the saint said, "Amen." Then the saint seated himself, and answered and said to Anthimos, "I laud your way of life which is almost incorporeal. I also pray that it may shine forth in the faith with respect to the things which characterize the Man of God, each one of which, when bereaved of its companion, its possession is without profit." The holy elder, [namely Anthimos], said, "In the definition

Anthimos, 'I commend your manner of life which is little short of incorporeal. I pray as well that it may shine out in the Orthodox faith, [171] namely those things which altogether characterize the man of God, for if one of these [virtues] is bereaved of its companions, its possession itself is of little use.' The venerable old man replied to Severos, 'I have not accepted, Oh father, the decree of faith of the Council of Chalcedon, rather the excommunication of Nestorius and Eutyches.' 'But, oh wondrous one,' replied the teacher, 'if you agree with the excommunication of heretics, you must necessarily agree with the Orthodox Faith, since it is by sound doctrine that we ought to rebuke [its] opponents, as established by the law of Paul the Great. Many councils of the Arian heretics cast out heretics, for example: that of Ariminum, Markellos of Galatia; that of Sirmium, Photinos; that which was gathered first at Seleucia of Isauria, and after that at the place whose chief was Eudoxios the archbishop here, [cast out] Makedonios who preceeded him.¹⁵⁹ This same Makedonios, who was bishop of this city, in no way wanted to imitate the dissimulation [of the Arians] and say that the Son was like the Father, but not of the same essence, but [similar] by a certain similarity which [172] man possesses, who is formed in the likeness of the One who lives. But from an open summit, as it is said, he proclaimed his own impiety, declaring that the Only-Begotten was in no way like the Father. Because of [all] this we neither accept the councils of heretics nor the excommunication of the heretics whom they cast out from themselves, since if a man has not the Orthodox Faith, he can neither reprove nor excommunicate. Whosoever denies the faith of Peter, from him is taken the authority of Peter, in accordance with what our Saviour said when Peter

of faith, Father, I do not accept the Synod of Chalcedon, but [only] the excommunication of Nestorius and Eutyches." The teacher [then] said to Anthimos, "If you bear witness to the expulsion of heretics, by necessity you [must also] bear witness to the Orthodox faith, and by sound doctrine reprove those who are opposed, as set out by the law of Paul the Great." See John. *Vie de Sévère* 254, n. 1, Paul the Great is the Apostle Paul. The 'law' in question is Titus 1:9. This text is found at the end of ed. Chabot IX, 21.

159 The Council of Ariminum (July 359) was summoned by the emperor Constantius II (ruled 337–61) to help resolve the raging Arian controversies of the fourth century. Markellos of Ankyra (d. c.374), an opponent of Arianism, was condemned at this council. At the Second Council of Sirmium (351) Photinos (d. 376), bishop of Sirmium and another anti-Arian, was deposed. The councils of Nicomedia/Seleucia (358) and Constantinople (360) were summoned by Constantius II to resolve the ongoing Arian controversies. Makedonios I (d. after 360) was bishop of Constantinople from 342 to 346 and 351 until his deposition at Constantinople in 360. He apparently inspired the establishment of yet another Arian sect, the Macedonians. Eudoxios (d. 370), previous bishop of Germanicia and Antioch, presided as bishop of Constantinople (360–70) after Makedonios I was deposed. See also Peisker 1903, 52.

professed God, "I will give unto you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever you should bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you loosen on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Therefore, that council which rejects the faith of Peter has not the power, either to loosen, or to bind, or to excommunicate.¹⁶⁰ The venerable [Anthimos] understood these words and inscribed them well in his mind. He departed immediately, abandoning everything: the episcopal throne, the chair, the honour, and the glory. Having spoken many things concerning the faith boldly before the emperor, Anthimos departed and became a guide and a part of those who were persecuted, or rather, their patriarch and teacher. God thus leads to the discovery of what [173] is excellent those who, not because of evil but out of ignorance, did not come [at first], as [with] Paul and Cornelius.¹⁶¹

76. This is the victorious crown of the God-clad Severos. Not long afterwards he was allowed, with the help of the pious empress, to escape from detention.¹⁶² He departed, after taking the crown of confessorship or rather martyrdom, since these things are judged by God, not by the outcome but by the intention. After having departed, therefore, he proceeded to the desert which was dear to him. Severos foresaw that the end of his life, that is, his departure from here, drew near. Since, therefore, all things for him were completed, namely the issues pertaining to [this] life, the race for the faith,¹⁶³ and as it were, Severos, like Moses, heard God say to him, 'Ascend the mountain and die there.'¹⁶⁴ For the spiritual mountain is the summit of the fulfilment of all virtuous conduct. From this point on he was alone, and he had none of his own notaries to write [for him], so by his own hand he wrote a very long letter to the venerable and excellent abbot John, called *bar Aphthonia*,¹⁶⁵ and through the latter to all the monasteries of the East concerning the union, brought about by him, between the venerable Theodosios and Anthimos, bishops of Alexandria and Constantinople.¹⁶⁶ [174] In this letter Severos prophesied a double prophecy concerning [both] his own demise as well as of the one to whom he wrote. In contrast, he [prophesied]

160 Matt. 16:16–19. On Paul the Great and the 'law', see annotation to paragraph 75 above.

161 See Acts 10:1–48. Both Paul and Cornelius are examples of late conversions.

162 Late summer or autumn 536.

163 1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1.

164 Deut. 32:49–50.

165 John bar Aphthonia (d. 537), the founder of the monastery of Qenneshre.

166 Theodosios I, patriarch of Alexandria (535–36) and Coptic pope of Alexandria (535–67), the last Alexandrian hierarch recognized by both Copts and Melkites. Anthimos, (non-Chalcedonian) patriarch of Constantinople (535–36).

in advance a long life for others, among whom is the very chaste, Agathonike, who was courageous like Deborah, [who] because of this [courage] is the mother of spiritual Israel.¹⁶⁷

77. The venerable John lived fifteen days after he received this letter and afterwards departed to Jesus who was beloved to him. For the great Severos – I would like to hold back here, O pious man of God Dometios, and leave this narrative without completion, sparing the ears of the faithful who could not bear hearing of the death of Severos. What is in fact wondrous, is that it is unbearable to bring it to utterance when the love for those who have departed is like that for those who are near. I would have held my peace, therefore, as I said, but had I not heard the scripture which tells us about the death of Abraham, of Moses, of Joshua bar Nun, of David, and of the other prophets, also what the godly David said, ‘A precious thing before the Lord is the death of His righteous ones,’¹⁶⁸ and contending against this life says, ‘Woe unto me since I am carried away in exile,’¹⁶⁹ and, ‘When will I go and see the face [175] of God?’ also, ‘my soul thirsts after Thee, the Living God,’¹⁷⁰ and again, ‘bring my soul out of prison,’¹⁷¹ calling prison this life of many groans, seeing death was still death and the word of the Resurrection was very obscure since the Lamb had not yet been sacrificed, nor sin loosed, nor death brought to naught. In order to show that he had received a double portion of his master’s (Elijah) spirit, a great event is also related concerning Elisha [the prophet] when the righteous man fell ill with the sickness from which he would die. After Elisha was dead, he caused a dead man to rise, something that his master (Elijah) did while he was still living,¹⁷² fashioning beforehand a type of a great mystery, for Jesus too, the worker of wonders, gave his disciples to do greater things than He Himself had done.¹⁷³ Shall we not in like manner, therefore, conclude this book with the glorious and wondrous departure of Severos from this life, that is, his return [to God]?

78. Shortly before his departure, while he was lain out on his bed and his strength enfeebled, his own [comrades] together with the physicians tried

167 Judg. 4:1–5:31, especially Judg. 5:7. The nun, Agathonike, appears only to be known here. This letter appears to be lost. *A Collection of Letters of Severus of Antioch*, ed and trans. Brooks is published in PO 12/2 and 14/1.

168 Ps. 116:15 (115:6).

169 Ps. 120(119):5.

170 Ps. 42(41):3.

171 Ps. 142(141):8.

172 2 Kings 13:14–21; 1 Kgs 17:17–24.

173 John 14:12.

repeatedly to persuade him to take a bath. He refused, however, saying that never yet had he viewed his [own] body since he had promised [176] Christ to bear the yoke of monasticism. Yet they pressed him more and more, saying, 'For our sake, [by] resting [in a bath], do not rend soul from body prematurely and inflict so great a harm on the Church. We will not force you to see your body. We will carry you [into the bath] in your clothing.' They persuaded him with words like these and many more. After they had borne Severos into his bath with his clothes on, they placed him on a slab of marble after having stretched him out on the ground – I know not whether this was to warm his body which already was dead, or because he could no longer sit. When they lifted him off the slab, he left a power upon that stone which could not be taken away so that until today, everyone who is seized by cold, fever, or by some other cause of bodily sickness, by but touching this stone is set free from the illness which had seized him. Could one thus not say that this was similar to the Apostolic figures of Peter and Paul, the one healing by his shadow [and] the other by the rags of his garments, that they [all] were healing those who were ill?¹⁷⁴

79. When they saw, therefore, that Severos at that moment was already near his end, they let loose sounds of groaning [177] and supplicated him not to abandon them in times of trouble and tumult like these, as if believing to die or not to die was placed in his hands. Like the great Paul he said, "Men, what are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?"¹⁷⁵ It is a good time for me to be freed to be with Christ.¹⁷⁶ For me, the measure of life is fulfilled. The pastoral work entrusted to me is completed. Therefore, I also say to Jesus the high priest, as did the chief of the patriarchs, Jacob, "I did not bring before you [an animal] torn by wild beasts."¹⁷⁷ The course of my career is complete. For a long time I have been ready for departure, having meditated on this every hour. After a little while, you too will depart and quickly will we receive one another as well as Christ. Endlessly shall we take delight in each other, if we but obtain the same end, where the habitation is of those who rejoice in and glorify the Lord.'

80. After Severos said these things, he dispatched to heaven his spirit but to us his body, or rather his entire self to us, for we believe that now he

¹⁷⁴ Acts 5:15, 19:12.

¹⁷⁵ Acts 21:13.

¹⁷⁶ Phil. 1:23.

¹⁷⁷ Gen. 31:39.

gives even more heed to us, being made by God an intercessor for us. [Soon after his death], all the bishops, prophets, [178] and teachers, especially the teachers of the Church, went to meet him so as to receive this contender on their behalf and advocate, after his travails and sweat. In heaven with them he dances and awaits the upright judgement where, with them, he will receive the crown of justice.¹⁷⁸

81. When Severos' venerable body was set down lifeless, it gave off the sweet aroma of baptism, an aroma which did not depart from him all [the days of] his life, so that those who encountered this aroma wafting to them from him reckoned, not knowing the secret, that he was perfumed with myrrh.

82. After his death, Severos performed a miracle as also did Elisha the prophet.¹⁷⁹ When he died, they made a tomb for him which did not match the measure of his height since it was much too short. Because they did not realize this, they dismissed the workman, who was a foreigner. When they came to lay the body [to rest], however, they could not do so since the tomb could not contain it. After they laid the body down on top of the sarcophagus, they were perplexed. Then, after not a little while, [some of] them came up with an idea and proposed to fold [his] legs. The others, however, [179] were not inclined to hear of this, but considered this an absurdity when, as by a certain divine power, the excellent body descended with neither any of his limbs being broken nor at all bent. Whether the body contracted or the sarcophagus was lengthened, only God the performer of these things knows, who after [their] death glorifies those who glorify Him. For now the grace of the Holy Spirit overshadows all the more his excellent bones, so that should any but approach his tomb, every sickness and infirmity is healed and the demons are driven off.

83. With your encouragement, O man of God, Dometios, I have relied on your prayers and hearkened unto these things. I have laboured according to the measure of power [lying] within me. I have composed no panegyric as I stated earlier. I have not attended unto Severos' entire life – that was not possible – but I have plucked a blossom of sorts from the meadow or one lovely cluster of grapes from the vine. I offer something delightful to you and to those who read it. From you I only request prayers, [179] as recompense for [my] labours, that I may be ready to depart from the body

¹⁷⁸ Severos of Antioch died on 8 February 538.

¹⁷⁹ 2 Kgs 13:13–21.

and stand uncondemned before the tribunal of Christ, with Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit is the glory, honour and power unto ages of ages, Amen.

(Final caption) The narrative of the deeds of the life of Holy Saint Severos, patriarch of Antioch, comes to a close, translated from Greek to Syriac by the pious, religious, and holy Abbot, Sergios, son of Karya.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Sergios bar Karya was subsequently bishop of Harran. See Baumstark 1922, 184–85. Apparently a letter of Sergios bar Karya survives in BL, Add. 17193, 49. The insertion of Sergios' translated text into its current context apparently occurred no earlier than 741. See Peisker 1903, 3, 59.

GLOSSARY

Acacian schism: this schism between Rome and Constantinople, which lasted from 484 until 519, came about as a result of Zeno's *Henotikon* of 482; it takes its name from Acacius who was patriarch of Constantinople (472–89) at the time when Pope Felix III broke off communion with Constantinople.

Apollinarius and Apollinarianism: Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicea (d. c.390), was a strong opponent of the various forms of Arianism, and some of his christological phraseology, such as 'hypostatic union', later became standard. It appears that in his stress on the divinity of the incarnate Christ he held that the Logos took the place of the human soul in the incarnate Christ. In the sixth century he was regularly regarded as a theological predecessor of Eutyches.

Chalcedon, Council of: the Council was convened in 451 by the emperor Marcian (450–57), with the aim of reversing theological trends promoted at the Second Council of Ephesus (449). The 'definition of faith' which it produced remained the cause of much controversy over the ensuing seventy years, and was only definitely imposed by Justin I (518–27) and especially Justinian I (527–65) on their subjects. The source of controversy lay above all in the use of two ambiguous terms in the central section of its christological formula, 'One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, made known *in two natures* which exist without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, ... concurring into one Person and *one hypostasis*...' For the Chalcedonians, 'nature' was understood as close in sense to *ousia*, 'essence', whereas for the Miaphysites 'nature' was understood as close to *hypostasis* (hence their formula, following Cyril of Alexandria, 'one incarnate nature of God the Word'; thus for them the Chalcedonian formula was seen as 'Nestorian' and heretical). The draft of the Council's formula evidently had '*out of two natures*', which would have been acceptable to most Miaphysites. For the Church of the East the 'one hypostasis' (translated as *qnoma*) was problematic, since *qnoma* for them usually had more the sense of 'set of

properties' (Greek *idiotētes*) and the Chalcedonian formula was seen as going against their favoured 'two natures and their *qnome*' (i.e. two sets of properties).

comes: a title given to various high-ranking state office-holders; there were three levels of ranking.

cubicularius: a eunuch who served in the emperor's 'sacred bed-chamber' in the palace in Constantinople.

Dyophysites: those who uphold a 'two Nature' christology, as laid down at the Council of Chalcedon; the term Dyophysite also applies to the Church of the East (based outside the Roman Empire, and so not involved in any of the imperial Councils). Strict Dyophysites (among whom Diodore and Theodore are included) disapproved of any 'theopaschite' language, implying that God 'suffered' (see also 'Theopaschite Edict').

Ephesus, First Council of: held in 431 and summoned by the emperor Theodosius II, the aim was to resolve the controversy that had arisen between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius. In the event the two sides met separately, though eventually the one (presided by Cyril) which deposed Nestorius was recognized by Theodosius.

Ephesus, Second Council of: summoned by Theodosius II and held in 449, this council was largely dominated by Dioskoros, bishop of Alexandria; at its first session dealt with the case of Eutyches, who had appealed against his condemnation at a synod in 448. Thanks to an ambiguous confession of faith, Eutyches was acquitted. Later sessions were concerned with complaints against various Dyophysite bishops, including Ibas of Edessa and Theodoret of Cyrillus, both of whom were deposed. The Council's decisions were reversed in 451 at the first session of the Council of Chalcedon, where the Acts of the first session of Ephesus II were read out, and repudiated (it was designated by Pope Leo as the 'Robber' Council [*latrocinium*]). The Acts of the later sessions (with the deposition of Ibas and Theodoret) only survive in a Syriac translation.

Eutyches: an archimandrite in Constantinople (d. 454) whose strongly anti-Dyophysite teaching led to his being accused of holding that Christ only had a divine nature. He was deposed in 448, but reinstated, thanks to his provision of an ambiguous confession of his faith, at the Second Council of Ephesus (449). He was again deposed (and exiled) at the Council of Chalcedon (451). In subsequent controversies Chalcedonians frequently misleadingly described Miaphysites as 'Eutychians' (or 'Monophysites'), whereas most Miaphysites (and especially Severos) always strongly condemned Eutyches' teaching, maintaining instead

that Christ was consubstantial *both* with the Father and ‘with us’ (and not *only* with the Father).

***Henotikon*:** this ‘formula of union’ was issued as an edict by the emperor Zeno 482, with the intention of putting an end to the controversies that had arisen over the Council of Chalcedon (451): carefully taking a middle path, and condemning both Nestorius and Eutyches, it deliberately avoided all mention of the Council of Chalcedon and its terms ‘nature’ and ‘hypostasis’, whose meaning was understood in different ways. While the *Henotikon* proved acceptable to many (including Severos), it too proved controversial, and hardliners on either side wanted an explicit acceptance or rejection of Chalcedon. The *Henotikon* no longer had any effect after the accession of Justin I in 518 and the imposition of the Council of Chalcedon’s christology. See also Introduction, section 2, and the annotation to Zacharias, *VSev.* 157.

Ibas, Letter to Mari: Ibas was bishop of Edessa from 435 to 449, when he was deposed at the Second Council of Ephesus, only to be reinstated at the Council of Chalcedon in 451; he died in 457. His Letter to Mari (whose identity and whereabouts remains uncertain) set out his Dyophysite teaching, and was one of the documents read out and approved at the Council of Chalcedon. Like Leo’s *Tome*, it was objectionable to Miaphysites, and indeed became a source of embarrassment in the early sixth century to many Dyophysites in the East as well, with the result that it was eventually condemned by Justinian in 543/4 (along with the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret’s works against Cyril of Alexandria, these all constituting the ‘Three Chapters’); the condemnation was then confirmed in 553 at the Council of Constantinople.

***libellus* of Hormisdas:** as a condition for the ending of the Acacian schism in March 519, after the accession of Justin I, Pope Hormisdas (514–23) insisted that the emperor should require all clergy to sign a *libellus*, or document, accepting the Council of Chalcedon (along with some other conditions).

***magistros*, *magister*:** the term was used in various contexts; thus the *magister militum* was a high military officer, while the *magister officiorum* was head of the civil administration; in Zacharias, *VSev.* 88 *magistros* probably refers to the president of the students’ union in Berytos.

Messalians (or Euchites): both terms denote ‘prayers’, the former being derived from Syriac *msallyane*. The name first appears in the mid-fourth century and refers to a nebulous movement of a charismatic character

which originated in Mesopotamia. They were accused of, among other things, rejecting the Church's sacraments (relying on interior prayer). The term later tended to be used loosely of individuals or groups who were considered to show too much independence from ecclesiastical authority.

Miaphysites: those who uphold the 'one Nature' christology, as expressed in Cyril of Alexandria's christological formulation 'one incarnate nature of God the Word'. The term 'Miaphysite' has been introduced in modern times to distinguish the teaching of Severos (and all the Oriental Orthodox Churches today) from the 'Monophysite' position of Eutyches, who held that Christ is consubstantial with the Father, but not 'with us', seeing that Eutyches' views have always been condemned just as much by Miaphysites as by Dyophysites: thus, whereas the Miaphysite position upholds 'one incarnate nature out of two natures' (i.e. divinity and humanity), Monophysite implies that the incarnate nature is *only* divine.

Monophysites: the term properly applies only to Eutychians (followers of Eutyches), that is, those who held that the 'one Nature' in the incarnate Christ was *only* the divine nature (as opposed to the Miaphysite teaching that the 'one Nature' is 'composed' of both the divinity *and* the humanity). In the polemic literature of the past (and unfortunately in much modern academic writing) the term has misleadingly also been used to refer to Miaphysites.

Nestorius: Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (428–31), was deposed at the First Council of Ephesus and exiled to Upper Egypt where he died c.451. His Dyophysite christology was strongly opposed by Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria (412–44) in a number of works which were later treated as authoritative both by Chalcedonian Dyophysites and by Miaphysites. Since most of Nestorius' works have not survived, the exact nature of his teaching on christology remains a matter of dispute.

Nestorian: the term has traditionally been applied to the Church of the East (in the Sasanian Empire), since the name of Nestorius is held in veneration by this Church as a martyr figure for the Dyophysite cause; their christological teaching, however, owes much more to Theodore of Mopsuestia than to Nestorius. To both Chalcedonian Dyophysites and to Miaphysites 'Nestorian' is understood as referring to a heretical teaching according to which Christ had a split personality, now acting as divine, and now as human.

patrikios: an honorary title sometimes granted to high officials.

plerophoria: in the sense of 'assurance', *plerophoria* was used of documents

that set forth, as a public statement, the doctrinal position of an individual or a group of people.

rhetor: or ‘orator’; besides designating a teacher of rhetoric, the term could also be used of an educated person who undertook public speaking in some role or other.

scholastikos: a person with legal training, an advocate; also used of a well-educated person.

Sleepless Monks: the monastery of the ‘sleepless monks’ (*Akoimētai*) in Constantinople was a bastion of strict Dyophysite teaching. The name stems from their maintaining a continuous liturgical worship by means of successive choirs, each taking its turn in the psalmody. The monastery had been founded, c.400, by a famous Syrian monk named Alexander.

sumponos: an assessor, or assistant to a magistrate.

Theopaschite Edict: this edict, issued by Justinian on 15 March 533, gave official backing to a theopaschite formula that had been gaining ground among some supporters of Chalcedon (as well as among Miaphysites): the phraseology took the form of either ‘one of the Trinity was crucified’, or ‘one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh’ (hence the term ‘theopaschite’). The formula was devised in order to oppose an extreme Dyophysite christology that strictly allocated Christ’s miracles to his divinity and his human characteristics of hunger, tiredness etc. to his humanity, thus making too great a separation between the two natures. The edict was accepted by two successive popes, John II in 534 and Agapetus in 536. See also section 2 of the Introduction.

Tome of Leo: This letter of June 449 written by Pope Leo (440–61) and addressed to Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople (447–49), was a product of the controversy over Eutyches; in it Leo set out his own strongly Dyophysite position and his *Tome* was read out at the Council of Chalcedon and included in its Acts. Its christological teaching, like that of the Letter of Ibas, was regularly objected to by Miaphysites.

Trisagion: the term is applied to the liturgical acclamation ‘Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal’. See further section 2 of the Introduction, and the annotation to Zacharias, *VSev.* 158.

Typos: an official edict (as Zacharias, *VSev.* 149).

APPENDIX: BISHOPS OF THE FIVE MAIN SEES, c. MID-FIFTH TO MID-SIXTH CENTURIES

(* denotes Miaphysite)

Alexandria

Cyril 412–44

Dioskoros 444–51

Proterios 451–57

*Timothy II Aelurus 457–60 (and 475–77)

Timothy II Salofakiolos 460–75 (and 477–82)

*Timothy II Aelurus 475–77

*Peter III Mongos 477 (and 482–89)

Timothy II Salofakiolos 477–82

John I Talaia 482

*Peter III Mongos 482–89

*Athanasios II 489–96

*John I 496–505

*John II 505–16

Dioskoros II 516–7

*Timothy III 517–35

*Theodosios 535–66

*Gaianos (Julianist) 535

Paul the Tebennesiot 537–40

Antioch

Domnos 441–50

Maximos 451–55

Basil 457–58

Akakios 458–59

Martyrios 459–70

Peter the Fuller 470 (and 485–89)

Julian 471–75

John II 476–77

Stephan II 477–79
Kalendion 479–84
Peter the Fuller 485–89
Palladios 490–98
Flavian II 498–512
*Severos 512–18 (d. 538)
Paul II 519–21
Euphrasios 521–26
Ephrem 527–545

Constantinople

Gennadios I 458–71
Akakios 472–89
Fravitas 489–90
Euphemios 490–96
Makedonios II 596–511
Timothy I 511–18
John II 518–20
Epiphanius 520–35
(*)Anthimos 535–36
Menas 536–52

Jerusalem

Juvenal 422–58
*Theodosios 451–57
Anastasios I 458–78
Martyrios 478–86
Sallustios 486–94
Elias I 494–516
John III 516–24
Peter 524–52

Rome

Leo I 440–61
Hilarius 461–68
Simplicius 468–83
Felix III 483–92
Gelasius I 492–96
Anastasios II 496–98

Symmachus 498–514

Hormisdas 514–23

John I 523–26

Felix IV 526–30

Boniface II 530–32

John II 533–35

Agapetus I 535–36

Silverius 536–37

Vigilius 537–55

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APPENDIX: SEVEROS' CATHEDRAL HOMILIES

The Syriac translation of Severos' 125 *Cathedral Homilies*, in the revised version by Jacob of Edessa, has been published in 17 fascicles of the *Patrologia Orientalis* over the course of seventy years (1906–76). A useful table, indicating location and exact date (where known), the subjects covered, and the existence of any Greek and/or Coptic witnesses (usually fragmentary), is provided by Alpi 2009, I, 187–94. The years run from November to November.

- Year 1 (512/3): Homilies 1–34
- 2 (513/4): 35–60
- 3 (514/5): 61–79
- 4 (515/6): 80–98
- 5 (516/7): 99–112
- 6 (517/8): 113–25

The publication of the *Cathedral Homilies* in Jacob of Edessa's revision (Syr. II) in *Patrologia Orientalis* appeared as follows:

- 1–17 PO 38.2 (5–7, 17 lost; lacunae in 1–4, 8–9, 11–13, 16)
18–25 PO 37.1 (lacunae in 18)
26–31 PO 36.4
32–39 PO 36.3
40–45 PO 36.1
46–51 PO 35.1
52–57 PO 4.1
58–69 PO 8.2
70–76 PO 12.1
77 PO 16.5 (also with Syr. I and Greek)
78–83 PO 20.2
84–90 PO 23.1
91–98 PO 25.1
99–103 PO 22.2
104–12 PO 25.4
113–19 PO 26.3
120–25 PO 29.1 (with general introduction)

INDEX OF NAMES

References are to sections; numbers to the left of // refer to Zacharias, *VSev.*, while those to the right of // refer to Anon., *VSev.*; if no // is present, then the reference is to Zacharias, *VSev.*

bp = bishop, ch. = church, emp. = emperor, mon. = monastery

Abraham **58 // 8, 50, 77**
Adam **7, 64 // 33**
Adelphians **148**
Adrastos, *scholastikos* **50**
Agathonike // **76**
Aineas, sophist **124**
Akakios, bp of Constantinople **141, 142, 156 // 40**
Akakios, mon. of **148, 153**
Akephaloi **148**
Alexandria **6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 25, 29, 44, 50, 59, 62, 77, 87, 103, 105, 123, 141, 147 // 13, 20, 22, 40, 76**
Alexandrian(s) **9, 71**
Ammonios, philosopher **16, 25**
Amphilochios **69**
Anastasios **71**
Anastasis, ch. **63**
Anastos/Anastasios **71, 117, 118, 123, 135**
Anatolios **71, 109, 123**
Andreas **121**
Anthimos // **74, 75, 76**
Antinoe **106**
Antioch **70, 122, 129, 148, 149, 153, 154 // 16, 24, 25, 48, 49, 55, 59**
Antiochenes // **60**
Antony, St **106, 135**
Apameia **153**
Aphrodisias **13, 17, 49, 50, 54**
Aphrodite **47**
Aphthonios, sophist **29**

- Aphtonía // **Title, 76, 77**
 Apion, *patrikios* **147 // 43**
 Apollinarius **144, 147, 157 // 43**
 Apollo **47, 54**
 Ares **47**
 Arians // **43, 75**
 Armenian **74**
 Arminium // **75**
 Artemis **47**
 Ascalon **122**
 Asia **49, 74**
 Asklepiodotos of Alexandria **16, 17, 25, 49, 54**
 Asklepiodotos of Caria **17**
 Asklepiodotos of Heliopolis **74, 88, 90**
 Asterios **148**
 Asty **19**
 Athanasius **67**
 Athanasios, monk **13, 14, 15, 22, 29, 53, 56, 58, 61**
 Athanasios **77**
 Athanasios, bp of Alexandria **142**
 Athena **47**
 Baal // **58**
 Babylon // **58**
 Barnabas // **49**
 Barsauma, bp of Nisibis **155, 156**
 Basil of Caesarea **11, 63, 67, 69, 111, 138 // 16**
 Beelzebub **5**
 Beit Aphtonía // **Title**
 Berytos **62, 70, 71, 77, 90, 115, 118, 119, 121, 123, 124, 127, 129, 132, 138, 150**
 // **10, 24, 39**
 Bethsaida // **8**
 Blues **141**
 Bostra **158**
 Byblos **89**
 Caesar // **16**
 Caesarea (Capp.) **85 // 76**
 Caesarea (Pal.) **118, 138 // 39**
 Canopite **121**
 Cappadocia(n) **85 // 16**
 Caria(n) **13, 17, 20, 50, 54**
 Celer // **45**
 Chalcedon // **40, 56, 57, 68, 75**
 Chrysaorios **74, 88, 90, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101**

churches

- 'Anastasia' (Anastasis/Resurrection) **63, 71**
- St John Baptist **127**
- St Jude **85**
- St Leontios **100, 107, 109, 113, 127**
- St Stephen **70**
- Theotokos **63, 91**
- Constantine, emp. // **22**
- Constantinople **11 // 40, 42, 47, 74, 76**
- Coptic **35**
- Cornelius // **75**
- Cyril of Alexandria **67, 69, 147 // 7, 44, 68**
- Cyril of Jerusalem **111**
- Damascus // **22**
- Daniel // **22**
- Darius **94**
- David // **8, 43, 44, 77**
- Deborah // **76**
- Demetrios **29**
- Democharios, *scholastikos* **54**
- Diocaesarea // **68**
- Diodore **154 // 44**
- Dionysos **47**
- dipondioi* **62**
- Dometios // **Title, 26, 77, 83**
- Edessa **71, 117, 135**
- ediktaios* **62**
- Egypt **29, 46, 50, 57, 74, 102, 106, 123, 141, 146 // 60**
- Egyptian(s) **3, 47, 87, 88, 106, 117, 157, 158**
- Eighteenth (milestone), mon. of **123**
- ekdikos* **49, 91**
- Eleutheropolis **135 // 35**
- Elia **138**
- Elia, bp of Jerusalem **149**
- Elijah, OT **15, 138 // 8, 24**
- Elisha, OT **138 // 2, 8, 24, 77, 82**
- Elisha **70, 109, 119, 123 // 27, 32**
- Emesa **127**
- Enaton*, mon. **13, 28, 33, 53**
- Enoch // **8**
- Entrechios, prefect **29**
- Ephesus **8**
- Epiphanios **140**

- Epiphanios, bp of Tyre **158**
 Epiros **54**
 Esau // **4**
 Ethiopian **75, 76, 77**
 Eudoxios **62**
 Eudoxios, bp // **75**
 Eunomios **69 // 43**
 Eunomios, abbot **148**
 Eupraxios, *cubicularius* **146, 148**
 Eusebius of Caesarea **138**
 Eutyches **144, 147, 157 // 43, 57, 70, 75**
 Evagrius **70, 72, 73, 77, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 113, 117, 119, 120, 123, 124, 125, 128, 129, 134**
 Eve **46, 64**
 Flavian, bp of Antioch **149, 153, 154, 157, 158 // 48, 56**
 Fravittas, bp of Constantinople **142**
 Galatia // **75**
 Gaza **27, 71, 106, 124, 137, 144 // 22, 37**
 Georgios **74, 88, 90**
 Greens **141**
 Gregory of Nyssa **11, 63, 67, 69, 111, 138(?)**
 Gregory of Nazianzus **51, 69, 139 // 16, 47**
 Habakkuk // **22**
 Heliopolis **74**
 Helios **55**
Henotikon **157**
 Heraiskos **16, 25**
 Herodians // **43**
 Hesychios **45**
 Hezekiah // **58**
 Homs (Emesa) **127**
 Horapollon, *grammatikos* **12, 14, 16, 22, 25, 26, 27, 32, 44**
 Iberia **117**
 Iberian(s) **106, 148, 150 // 20**
 Ignatius // **53, 57**
 Illos **54**
 Illyrian **74**
 Isaias **106, 117, 153**
 Isaurian **148**
 Isidoros **16, 25, 51**
 Isidoros **77**
 Isidore/John **148**
 Isis **17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 37, 47**

Israel(ites) // **2, 44, 59, 60, 76**
 Jacob, OT // **4, 79**
 James, NT **85**
 Jeremiah // **8, 62**
 Jerusalem **111, 128, 143, 149 // 18**
 Jesus **4, 24, 39, 44, 55, 56, 60, 72, 102–04, 110, 117, 118, 125, 128, 134, 138, 144, 146, 160 // 2, 18, 22, 28, 43–45, 68, 77, 79**
 Jews **5**
 Joel // **41**
 John the Baptist **99, 127 // 8**
 John bar Aphthonia // **76, 77**
 John of Beit Aphthonia // **Title**
 John (Apostle) // **8**
 John the Canopite **121, 122 // 25, 27, 28**
 John (Chrysostom) **11, 69, 111 // 13**
 John the *Sumgraphos* **9**
 John, bp of Berytos **88**
 John the Egyptian, bp of Sebennytos **106**
 John, monk **57**
 John **110, 111, 112, 140, 150 // 39**
 John **146**
 John // **25, 27**
 John ‘the Fuller’ **74**
 John/Isidore **148**
 John the Palestinian **85, 86**
 John Rufus **121**
 Jonah // **8**
 Joseph, OT // **13**
 Joseph, NT **85**
 Joshua son of Nun // **77**
 Josiah // **58**
 Judas, ch. of St **85**
 Julian, bp of Bostra **158**
 Kanopos **17, 34**
 Karya // **final caption**
 Kelenderis **148**
 Klementinos, *patrikios* **146**
 Konstantinos **77, 79, 90**
 Kosmas, *paramonarios* **85, 86**
 Kosmas, *cubicularius* **141**
 Kroisos **54**
 Kronos **23, 36, 47**
 Lampetios **148**

Latin **51**
 Lazaros // **41**
 Lazarus **58, 121**
 Leo, Pope // **44, 56, 57**
 Leontios **54**
 Leontios, s. of Eudoxios **62**
 Leontios, *magistros* **88, 89, 90, 100**
 Leontios, *paramonarios* **112**
 Leontios, ch. of St **100, 107, 109, 113, 127 // 18**
 Lesbos **27, 29, 51**
 Leukios **123**
 Libanios **11 // 16**
 Lot, OT // **10**
 Lycia **70, 71**
 Lydia **54**
 Magi **94**
 Maiuma **137 // 22, 37**
 Makedonios, bp of Constantinople **152, 154, 157 // 40, 44, 45, 47, 48, 75**
 Mamas, abbot **148**
 Manetho **81**
 Manichaeans **73 // 43**
 Marcion of Sinope // **70**
 Marcian, emp. // **22**
 Markellos // **75**
 Martyrion **96, 97**
 Martyrios **88**
 Mary **85, 91 // 45, 70**
 Menas **9, 11, 45, 59, 60, 61, 158**
 Menas the Cappadocian **85 // 13, 54**
 Menuthis **17, 18, 19, 22, 33, 35, 38, 40, 41, 46**
 Moses **63, 64 // 8, 60, 61, 76, 77**
 Mytilene **29**
 Nephalios **141, 142, 143, 145 // 40**
 Nestorius **8, 144, 147, 150, 154, 156, 157, 158 // 7, 43, 44, 75**
 Nikomedia **148**
 Ninevites // **63**
 Noah // **8**
 Nonnos, bp of Aphrodisias **49**
 Nubian // **40**
 Nyssa **111**
Oktokaidekaton, mon. **123**
 Oriens **153, 154, 157, 158**
 Origen **148**

Ostanos **81**
 Palestine **106, 117, 118, 119, 122, 136, 141, 148, 150, 153 // 20, 40, 41**
 Palestinian **85, 138**
 Pamphilos **138**
 Pamprepios **54**
 Paralios **12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 35, 51, 53, 55, 58, 61**
 Patara **71, 123**
 Patrikios **// 45**
 Paul, NT **103, 138 // 4, 22, 49, 70, 75, 78, 79**
 Paul, *patrikios* **147 // 43**
 Peripatetic **15**
 Persia **155**
 Persians **94**
 Peter NT **158 // 8, 22, 75, 78**
 Peter the Iberian **106, 117, 118, 120, 121, 122?, 123, 129, 130, 132, 137, 140, 144, 148, 150, 153 // 20–22, 24, 30**
 Petros, bp of Alexandria **29, 33, 34, 39, 46, 47, 49, 141, 142 // 40**
 Petros of Caesarea **138, 139, 140, 151 // 39, 51, 52**
 Pharaoh **101, 102**
 Philadelphia **148**
Philalethes **147 // 44**
 Philippos **71, 123 // 27**
 Philistines **// 43, 44**
philoponoi **9, 27, 31, 45**
 Phoebus **// 61**
 Phoenicia **4, 6, 13, 59, 61, 62, 70, 103, 106, 153 // 45, 48**
 Photeinos **// 75**
 Pisidia(n) **7**
 Plousianos **123**
 Polykarpos **77, 88**
 Pontus **138**
 Porphyry **55**
primicerius **29**
 Proklos, sophist **54**
 Proterios, bp of Alexandria **// 22**
 Psychapollon **44**
 Pulcheria **// 22**
pwrw **90**
 Pyrrhos **54**
 Qohelet **// 41**
 Romanos **// 36**
 Romanos, mon. of **135, 138, 148, 153**
 Rome **158**

- Royal Stoa **1, 2, 71**
 Samosata **70**
 Sadducees // **43**
 Samson // **43**
 Satan **5, 38**
 Sebennytyos **106**
 Seleucia // **75**
 Senate **8, 17, 46**
 Sergios **final caption**
 Severos **7, 8, 10, 11, 59, 60, 61, 62, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 73, 87, 93, 103, 108, 111, 112, 115, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128, 131, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 144, 145, 147, 150, 152, 154, 157, 159, 160 // 1, 5, 7, 10–13, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 34–36, 39, 40, 42, 44–47, 49–54, 56–58, 60–62, 65, 66, 68, 71, 73–83**
 Severos, bp of Sozopolis // **7**
 Shalman **13, 15, 29, 33, 49, 53, 153**
 Sidon **48**
 Sirmium // **75**
 Sodom **52 // 16**
 Solym(oi) **29, 148**
 Sopatros **9**
 Sozopolis **7 // 7**
 Stephanos **13, 15, 20, 22, 29, 33, 49, 53, 56, 57, 58, 61 // 27, 28**
 Stephanos, Palestinian **71, 132**
 Stephen, ch. of St **70**
 Succensus // **68**
sumgraphos **9**
 Tabenessiotes **34, 35, 43**
 Thebes **74, 75**
 Theodore of Mopsuestia **154, 156 // 44**
 Theodoros, bp of Antinoe **106**
 Theodoros **121, 122, 140, 148, 150, 153 // 25, 27, 29–31, 39, 41**
 Theodosius II, emp. // **20, 22, 51**
 Theodosios, bp of Alexandria // **76**
 [Theotokos], ch. of **63, 91**
 Thessalonica **74, 88**
 Thomas, sophist **27**
 Timothy, NT **138**
 Timothy Aelurus // **22**
 Timotheos, bp of Constantinople **152 // 47**
 Tishbite **138**
 Tralles **74, 88**
 Tripolis **107, 109, 112 // 18**
 Trisagion **158**

Turgas, mon. of **153**
 Tychaion **46**
Typos (of Anastasios) **149**
 Tyre **118, 158**
 Tyrian // **8**
 Urbanus, *grammatikos* **51**
 Valentinian // **70**
 Zacharias **121**
 Zacharias (rhetor) // **24**
 Zebedee // **8**
 Zenodoros **71**
 Zenodoros, *scholastikos* **71, 109, 124**
 Zenodotos **27, 29, 51**
 Zenon, emp. **47, 54, 141, 157**
 Zeus **23, 47**
 Zoroastros **81**

SELECT INDEX OF GREEK WORDS

This is limited to the more significant Greek loanwords and borrowings found in the Syriac translations; references are by page of the edition in PO 2 and (**section**) number of the translations; numbers to the left of // refer to Zacharias, *VSev.*, while those to the right of // refer to Anon., *VSev.*; if no // is present, then the reference is to Zacharias, *VSev.* Greek words with Syriac derived forms (*-uta* for abstracts; *-aya* for adjectives; *-a'it* for adverbs) are given in brackets.

agōn 91(**125**), 108(**150**), 109(**152**) // 133(**17**), 136(**20**), 144(**35**), 153(**46**)
agōnistēs 26(**29**), 78(**106**)
akephaloi 107(**148**)
anankē 11(**9**)
antikēnsōr // 131(**15**)
apokrisis 94(**130**)
artokopos // 159(**58**)
astrologoi 71(**101**)
athlētēs // 135(**20**), 149(**41**)
autokratores 26(**31**)
balaneion 33(**45**) // 159(**58**), 176(**78**)
beredos 83(**117**)
boēthos 43(**57**)
boulē 17(**17**), 33(**46**),
chartēs 38(**51**)
cheirotōnēsai 67(**88**), 69(**90**)
cheirotōnia 87(**122**), 102(**142**), 113(**157**)
chlanidion 93(**129**)
dēmosia // 133(**16**)
dēmosion 66(**88**), 69(**90**)
dikanikē 14(**13**), 46(**62**), 52(**67**), 54(**70**), 60(**77**), 89(**123**), 92(**128**), 95(**133**)
dikanikos 52(**67**)
dipondioi 48(**62**)
dogmata 105(**146**), 109(**152**) // 124(**1**); *dogma* 149–50(**41, 43**), 165–66(**68, 69**)
dogmatisai // 168(**72**)
ediktalioi 47(**62**)
eikōn 13(**11**), 57(**73**) // 176(**78**)
ekdikos 36(**49**), 69(**91**)
enaton 14(**13**), 24(**28**), 27(**33**), 39(**53**)
episkopeion // 159(**58**)

episkopos 13(**11**), 25(**29**), 27(**33**), 32(**43**), 36(**49**), 66(**88**), 73(**99**), 76(**108**), 87(**122**),
 100(**140**), 101(**141**), 107(**148**), 108(**149**), 111(**153 154**), 112(**155**), 113(**157**),
 114(**158**) // 131(**13**), 146(**38**), 148(**40**), 154(**49**), 157(**56**), 166–67(**68, 70**)
(episkopos) –uta 13(**11**) // 137–38(**22**)
euaggelion // 138(**22**), 152(**45**)
(euaggelion) –aya 51(**66**)
eunouchos 101(**141**), 104(**146**), 106(**148**)
exoria // 137(**22**), 153(**45**)
gournon // 178–79(**82**)
grammatikos 15(**14**), 37(**51**) // 164(**68**), 166(**69**)
(grammatikos) –uta 11(**8**), 15(**14**), 20(**22**), 98(**138**) // 146(**39**)
hairesis 103(**144**), 104(**146**), 105(**147**), 106(**148**), 113(**157**), 115(**159**) // 150(**43**)
hairetikos // 152(**44**), 166(**69**), 171–72(**75**)
(hairetikos) –aya 112(**155**) // 130(**12**), 151(**44**), 154(**49**), 165(**68**)
henōtikon 113(**157**)
huparcheia 84(**118**)
huparchos 26(**30 31**), 33(**46**), 37(**50**), 43(**57**), 60(**77**), 89(**123**)
hupatikos 104(**146**)
hupolēmpsīs 60(**78**)
hupomnēmata 91(**126**)
kaisar 38(**52**) // 133(**16**)
kandēla 28(**35**)
kanōn 112(**155 156**) // 138(**22**)
(katēgor) qutraga 70(**94**)
mqatrgana 102(**143**)
kathairesis // 127(**7**)
katholikē 51(**65**), 105(**146**), 107(**148**), 108(**148**), 113(**157**)
kellion // 142(**30**)
kephalaia // 151(**44**)
kērōmatitēs 35(**47**)
kindunos 60(**78**), 73(**98**), 114(**158**) // 156(**54**)
kinduneusai 68(**90**)
klērikos 112(**155**) // 146(**38**), 148(**40**)
klēros 26(**31**), 30(**40**), 64(**85**), 67(**88**), 81(**112**), 87(**122**), 102(**143**)
kubernētēs // 137(**22**)
kuboi 52(**66**)
libanon 28(**35**)
mageiros // 159(**58**)
magistros 66(**88**), 105(**146**) // 153(**45**)
magnētēs // 132(**16**)
metalla // 128(**8**)
muron // 178(**81**)
nomos 9(**4**), 14(**12 13**), 24(**28**), 26(**31**), 46(**62**), 47(**62**), 50(**64**), 51(**66**), 52(**67**),

- 55(**70, 71**), 56(**71**) // 133(**17**), 146(**39**), 171(**75**)
 (*nomos*) –*aya* // 129(**10**)
 (*nomos*) –*a'it* // 135(**20**)
notarios 25(**29**)
oktōkaidekaton 89(**123**)
orthodoxia 104(**146**) // 170(**75**)
orthodoxos 103(**144**), 111(**153**)
ostreion // 128(**8**)
ousia 39(**54**), 68(**90**), 97(**137**) // 165(**68**)
palation 102(**142**) // 150(**43**)
paramonarios 63(**85**), 71(**96**), 72(**97**), 73(**99**), 81(**112**)
patriarchēs // 172(**75**)
patrikios 104(**146**)
phantasia 21(**23**)
philalēthēs 106(**147**) // 152(**44**)
philoponoī 12(**9**), 24(**27**), 26(**31**), 33(**45**) // 130(**13**)
philosophia 9(**4**), 15(**13**), 39(**53**), 57(**73**), 83(**117**), 88(**123**) // 144(**34**)
philosophos 8(**2**), 16(**16**), 17(**17**), 18(**18**), 19(**20 21**), 23(**27**), 46(**62**), 56(**72**), 57(**73**),
 80(**110**), 86(**121**), 90(**124**)
 (*philosophos*) –*a'it* // 163(**64**)
 (*philosophos*) –*uta* 8(**3**), 13(**11**), 14(**13**), 17(**17**), 39(**53**), 43(**57**), 52(**67**), 54(**70**),
 56(**72**), 57(**73**), 76(**103**), 78(**106**), 80(**110**), 83(**117**), 85(**119**), 86(**119**), 88(**123**),
 89(**123**), 92(**127 128**), 93(**129**), 94(**131**), 95(**134**), 96(**135**), 99(**139**), 103(**145**),
 109(**150**), 110(**152 153**), 113(**157**) // 132(**16**), 149(**41**)
plakion // 176(**78**)
plērophorēsai 21(**23**)
poētēs // 160(**60**)
politeia 14(**13**), 47(**62**), 52(**67**), 56(**71**), 65(**85**)
popana 28(**35**)
pragmateia 106(**147**)
praxis 36(**50**), 48(**63**)
primikērios 25(**29**)
 (*pronoos*) *parnasa* 68(**90**)
prosphōnēsai 105(**147**)
prosphōnēsis 33(**45**)
prosphōnētikon 54(**69**) // 150(**43**)
protasis 19(**21**)
psaltai // 160(**60**)
psēphisma 110(**153**)
pwrw = ? 68(**90**)
rhētor 12(**10**), 46(**62**)
 (*rhētor*) –*uta* 11(**8**), 12(**9**) // 131(**15**), 146(**39**)
 –*aya* 91(**127**)

scholastikos 36(50), 39(54), 56(71) // 131(16)
(scholastikos) -uta 81(112), 92(127) // 141(27)
scholē 23(26 27), 54(70)
skeuarion 28(35)
sophistēs 11(9), 13(11), 14(13), 24(27), 25(29), 39(54), 90(124) // 131(16)
(sophistēs) -aya 16(16), 101(141)
stadion // 135(20)
stasis 54(70), 101(141)
stoa 7(1), 8(2), 56(71)
stratēlatēs // 153(45)
sumgraphos 12(9)
sumponos 25(29)
sunēgoros // 165(68), 178(80)
(sunēgoros) -uta // 148(39), 164(68)
sunodikē 36(49, 50), 101(142), 114(158)
sunodos 11(8), 102(143), 111(153) // 148(39), 153(45), 155(52), 157-8(56, 57),
 165-66(68), 171-72(75)
taxis 43(57), 60(77), 89(123)
theatron 51(66)
thēkē 61(80)
theologia 90(124) // 124(1), 158(57), 160(60)
theologos 37(51) // 153(47)
theōria 56-57(73), 76(103), 80(111), 81(111) // 124(1), 144(35), 161(60)
thronos // 153(47), 158(57)
timē 87(122)
toga 93(129)
tomos // 151(44), 157-58(56, 57), 167(70)
tupos 57(73), 108(149 150) // 125(3), 175(77)
(turannos) -uta 50(65)
xenos 100(139) // 146(37), 178(82)
zētēmata 106(148)

INDEX OF BIBLICAL REFERENCES

References are to sections; numbers to the left of // refer to Zacharias, *VSev.*, while those to the right of // refer to Anon., *VSev.*; if no // is present, then the reference is to Zacharias, *VSev.*

Genesis

1–2 **63**
2–3 **36**
3:1–6 **46**
3:15 // **16**
15:2 // **52**
19:12–13 **52**
19:21 // **61**
19:31 // **16**
24:12, 42 // **50**
24:27 // **52**
28:12 // **3**
31:39 // **79**
39:7–20 // **13**
49:17 // **16**

Exodus

7:14 **101**
14:28 **102**
15:4–5 **102**
32:11–14 // **61**
33:30–35 // **60**

Deuteronomy

32:49–50 // **76**

Judges

4:1–5:31 // **76**
5:7 // **76**
16:7–14 // **44**

16:22–31 // **62**

1 Samuel

17:32, 36 // **44**
17:48–50 // **44**
17:51 // **43**
18:6–7 // **44**
19:8 // **43**

1 Kings

17:17–24 // **77**
19:10, 14 **15**
19:16–21 **138**
19:19–21 // **24**

2 Kings

2:9 // **8**
2:11 **138**
8:4 // **2**
13:13–21 // **77, 82**
18:1–8 // **58**
23:1–30 // **58**

2 Chronicles

29:1–19 // **58**
34:1–7 // **58**

Psalms

42(41):3 // **77**
58(57):3 // **4**

95(94):7-8 105	
96(95):5 25, 42	1 Maccabees
97(96):7 42	2:52, 56, 57 // 8
115:4-5(113:12-13) 42	
116:15(115:6) // 77	Matthew
120(119):5 // 77	8:21-22 // 24
142(141):8 // 77	11:11 // 8
	12:24 5
Ecclesiastes (Qohelet)	16:16-19 // 75
3:8 // 41	22:12 // 16
	22:16-46 // 43
Isaiah	22:21 52
54:13 // 59	22:46 // 45
Jeremiah	Mark
1:5 // 8	12:13-34 // 43
7:16-17 // 62	12:17 // 16
Ezekiel	Luke
18:23 90	1:78-79 64
33:11 90	7:28 // 8
34:4 // 67	9:59-60 // 24
	10:18-19 38
Daniel	12:47 105
1:1-21 // 58	16:9 58
14(Bel):33-39 // 22	20:1-40 // 43
	20:25 // 16
Joel	John
3:10 // 41	1:3 24
	3:5 105
Amos	8:44 55
8:11 // 59	11:1-44 // 41
	13:23 // 8
Jonah	14:12 // 77
3:5 // 63	19:26 // 8
	20:2 // 8
Malachi	21:7, 21 // 8
1:2-3 // 4	
Ecclesiasticus (Bar Sira)	Acts
44:16, 17, 21 // 8	5:15 // 78
45:4 // 8	9:1ff. // 22
48:1-2 // 8	9:4 // 22

9:15 **150**
10:1–48 // **75**
13:2–3 // **49**
18:24 // **43**
19:12 // **78**
20:29 // **67**
20:30 // **70**

Romans
1:26 // **20**
6:3 // **18**
7:22 // **35**
9:13 // **4**

1 Corinthians
9:24 // **76**
9:26 // **5**
10:19–20 **41**
15:56 // **70**

2 Corinthians
12:9–10 // **22**
12:10 // **35**

Galatians
1:15 // **4**

Ephesians
1:21 **24**
2:6 **65**
3:16 // **35**
6:12 // **35**

Philippians
1:21–22 // **35**
1:23 // **28, 78**

1 Thessalonians
4:9 // **59**

2 Timothy
2:5 // **20**

Titus
1:9 // **75**
1:10–16 // **67**

Hebrews
11:10 **7**
13:14 **7**
12:1 // **76**

2 Peter
2:7–8 // **10**